



# Presidents of the Church

## Student Manual

*Religion 345*

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*Religion 345*

Published by  
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints  
Salt Lake City, Utah

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Printed in the United States of America

English approval: 2/12

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# Joseph Smith

## First President of the Church



### Highlights in the Life of Joseph Smith

#### Age      Events

- He was born December 23, 1805, in Sharon, Windsor County, Vermont, to Joseph and Lucy Mack Smith.
- 7      He endured surgery on his leg—diseased bone was removed (winter, 1812–13).
- 14      He saw and talked with God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ (spring, 1820).
- 17      Moroni visited him and told him about the Nephite record (Sept. 21–22, 1823; Moroni visited him annually thereafter, 1824–27).
- 21      He married Emma Hale (Jan. 18, 1827), obtained the plates (Sept. 22, 1827), and began the translation (Dec. 1827).
- 22      116 manuscript pages of the Book of Mormon were lost (June 1828).
- 23      He and Oliver Cowdery received the Aaronic Priesthood from John the Baptist (May 15, 1829); they received the Melchizedek Priesthood from Peter, James, and John (probably between May 16–28, 1829); the Three Witnesses were shown the plates (June 1829).
- 24      The Book of Mormon was published (first copies were available on Mar. 26, 1830); the Church was organized (Apr. 6, 1830).
- 25      He moved his family to Kirtland, Ohio (1831); he dedicated the temple site at Independence, Missouri (Aug. 3, 1831).
- 26      He was sustained as President of the high priesthood (Jan. 25, 1832).
- 27      The First Presidency was organized (Mar. 18, 1833).
- 28      He led Zion’s Camp from Ohio to Missouri (May–June 1834).
- 29      The members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (Feb. 14, 1835) and the Seventy (Feb. 28, 1835) were called and ordained; the Doctrine and Covenants was accepted as scripture (Aug. 17, 1835).
- 30      He dedicated the Kirtland Temple (Mar. 27, 1836); Jesus Christ, Moses, Elias, and Elijah appeared to him and Oliver Cowdery and restored priesthood keys (Apr. 3, 1836).
- 32      He was imprisoned in Liberty Jail (1838).
- 33      He directed the Church from Liberty Jail (Dec. 1838–Apr. 1839); the building of Nauvoo was begun (1839); the members of the Church gathered to Nauvoo and commenced the building of the area (1839).
- 35      Work began on the Nauvoo Temple; the immigration of European Church members was planned (1841).
- 36      The book of Abraham was published (Mar. 1, 1842); the Relief Society was organized (Mar. 17, 1842); he prophesied the Saints’ removal to the Rocky Mountains (Aug. 6, 1842).
- 37      He recorded revelation on eternal marriage (July 12, 1843).
- 38      He became a candidate for president of the United States of America (Jan. 1844); he and his brother Hyrum were martyred at Carthage Jail (June 27, 1844).

## No Trumpets Sounded His Birth [1.1]

President Spencer W. Kimball, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote:

“When clouds of error need dissipating and spiritual darkness needs penetrating and heavens need opening, a little infant is born. Just a few scattered neighbors in a hilly region in the backwoods [of Vermont] even know that Lucy [Mack Smith] is expecting. There is no prenatal care or nurses; no hospital, no ambulance, no delivery room. Babies live and die in this rough environment and few know about it.

“Another child for Lucy! No trumpets are sounded; no hourly bulletins posted; no pictures taken; no notice is given; just a few friendly community folk pass a word along. It’s a boy. Little do the brothers and sisters dream that a prophet is born to their family” (*Faith Precedes the Miracle* [1972], 324–25).

Joseph Smith Jr. was born on December 23, 1805, to Joseph and Lucy Mack Smith. These faithful parents taught their children religious truths. Lucy especially encouraged her children to study the Bible. Joseph Sr., though suspicious of traditional churches, had a strong belief in God. Both parents descended from generations of ancestors who sought to live by correct religious principles.



Joseph Smith Sr., father of the Prophet Joseph Smith, was born July 12, 1771, in Topsfield, Massachusetts.



Lucy Mack Smith, mother of the Prophet Joseph Smith, was born July 8, 1776, in Gilsun, New Hampshire.

Joseph Smith Jr. was a noble spirit, foreordained and tutored before he was born. He was raised a farm boy. During his early years his family moved often, trying to find a place to live where they could support themselves. Joseph worked with his family and suffered their hardships. They endured crop failure, land fraud, and betrayals in investment. Through it all, the Smith family played an important role in the restoration of the gospel in these latter days.



In 1811 the Smiths rented a farm in West Lebanon, New Hampshire. This home was identified as the Smiths' residence. It was torn down in 1967.

## Joseph Smith Was a Boy of Courage and Resolve [1.2]

Lucy Mack Smith wrote of the seven-year-old Joseph's struggle with an unusually severe infection in his left leg, which afflicted him shortly after he recovered from typhoid fever:

“His leg immediately began to swell and he continued in the most excruciating pain for two weeks longer. During this time, I carried him in my arms nearly continually, soothing him and doing all that my utmost ingenuity could suggest to ease his sufferings, until nature was exhausted and I was taken severely ill myself.

“Then Hyrum, who was always remarkable for his tenderness and sympathy, desired that he might take my place. As he was a good, trusty boy, we let him do so, and, in order to make the task as easy for him as possible, we laid Joseph upon a low bed and Hyrum sat beside him, almost incessantly day and night, grasping the most painful part of the affected leg between his hands and, by pressing it closely, enabled the little sufferer the better to bear the pain which otherwise seemed almost ready to take his life” (*History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, eds. Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor [1996], 73).

After several weeks and two unsuccessful attempts to reduce the swelling and drain the infection, a group of surgeons was consulted. Their recommendation was to amputate the leg, but Joseph's mother refused to allow it until they tried another operation. She wrote:

“The principal surgeon, after a moment's conversation, ordered cords to be brought to bind Joseph fast to the bedstead, but Joseph objected. When the doctor insisted that he must be confined, Joseph said decidedly, ‘No,



(1) Wooded area known as the Sacred Grove, (2) location of the restored log home first built by the Smith family, (3) home started by Alvin Smith, (4) view of Palmyra village. The Church purchased the entire Smith farm, including the Sacred Grove area in 1907.

Doctor. I will not be bound. I can bear the process better unconfined.'

"'Then,' said the doctor, 'will you take some wine? You must take something, or you can never endure the severe operation to which you must be subjected.'

"'No,' answered the boy, 'I will not touch one particle of liquor, nor will I be tied down, but I will tell you what I will do. I will have my father sit on the bed close by me, and then I will do whatever is necessary to be done in order to have the bone taken out. But, Mother, I want you to leave the room. I know that you cannot endure to see me suffer so. Father can bear it. But you have carried me so much and watched over me so long, you are almost worn out.' Then, looking up into my face, his eyes swimming with tears, he said beseechingly, 'Now, Mother, promise me you will not stay, will you? The Lord will help me. I shall get through with it, so do leave me and go a way off, till they get through with it.' . . .

"The surgeons began operating by boring into the bone of his leg, first on one side of the affected part, then on the other side, after which they broke it loose with a pair of forceps or pincers. Thus, they took away nine large pieces of the bone. When they broke off the first piece,

he screamed so loud with the pain of his leg that I could not forbear running to him, but as soon as I entered the room, he cried out, 'Oh, Mother! Go back! Go back! I do not want you to come in. I will tough it out, if you will go'" (Smith, *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, 74–75).

His recovery was slow, but young Joseph's leg eventually healed, leaving him with only an occasional slight limp.

### God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, Appeared to the Boy Prophet [1.3]

There was much religious excitement in western New York in the early 1800s (see *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 2nd ed. [2003], 30–32). Young Joseph Smith, influenced by this fervor and concerned for his spiritual condition, was confused by the conflicting teachings. There were so many churches and opposing sects; each contended against the rest. Who was right? How could anyone know for sure? Joseph found answers to these questions in the spring of 1820 when he was visited by God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ (see Joseph Smith—History 1:5–20).

When **President Harold B. Lee** visited the area we call the Sacred Grove on July 28, 1973, he said, “I know this is the place where the Father and the Son came” (in Dell Van Orden, “Pres. Lee Visits Hill Cumorah,” *Church News*, Aug. 4, 1973, 3).



In 1816, Palmyra, New York, was a small agricultural village. When the Erie Canal was built through the area in 1822, the town became a prosperous trade center. This intersection is called the Four Corners and has a different church on each corner: Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Baptist. The Presbyterian chapel was the first to be built, in 1832, one year after the Smiths had moved to Ohio. The others were completed by 1870.

## Additional Details from Joseph Smith’s 1832 Account of the First Vision [1.4]

During his ministry, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** shared his experience of the First Vision many times. He wrote the account in *Joseph Smith—History*, in the Pearl of Great Price, in 1838 (see *Joseph Smith—History* 1:2).

In an earlier account he gave some additional details of his concern about which church was right and about the troubling questions that eventually led him to ask God:

“At about the age of twelve years my mind became seriously impressed with regard to the all-important concerns for the welfare of my immortal soul, which led me to searching the scriptures, believing, as I was taught, that they contained the word of God. Thus, applying myself to them and my intimate acquaintance with those of different denominations led me to marvel exceedingly, for I discovered that they did not adorn their profession by a holy walk and godly conversation agreeable to what I found contained in that sacred depository. This was a grief to my soul. Thus from the age of twelve years to fifteen I pondered many things in my heart concerning the situation of the world of mankind, the contentions and divisions, the wickedness and abominations, and the darkness which pervaded the minds of mankind.

My mind became exceedingly distressed, for I became convinced of my sins, and by searching the scriptures I found that mankind did not come unto the Lord but that they had apostatized from the true and living faith. And there was no society or denomination that built upon the gospel of Jesus Christ as recorded in the New Testament. And I felt to mourn for my own sins and for the sins of the world, for I learned in the scriptures that God was the same yesterday, today, and forever, that he was no respecter of persons, for he was God. For I looked upon the sun—the glorious luminary of the earth—and also the moon, rolling in their majesty through the heavens, and also the stars shining in their courses, and the earth also upon which I stood, and the beasts of the field and the fowls of heaven and the fish of the waters, and also man walking forth upon the face of the earth in majesty and in the strength of beauty. . . . And when I considered upon these things, my heart exclaimed, ‘Well hath the wise man said it is a fool that saith in his heart there is no God.’ My heart exclaimed, ‘All these bear testimony and bespeak an omnipotent and omnipresent power, a



“When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air” (*Joseph Smith—History* 1:17).



A typical camp meeting about 1830–35; drawing by A. Rider

being who maketh laws and decreeth and bindeth all things in their bounds, who filleth eternity, who was and is and will be from all eternity to eternity.’ And when I considered all these things and that that being seeketh such to worship him as worship him in spirit and in truth, therefore I cried unto the Lord for mercy, for there was none else to whom I could go and obtain mercy. And the Lord heard my cry in the wilderness and while in the attitude of calling upon the Lord, in the [15th] year of my age, a pillar of light above the brightness of the sun at noon day came down from above and rested upon me and I was filled with the spirit of God. And the Lord opened the heavens upon me and I saw the Lord and he spake unto me saying, ‘Joseph, my son, thy sins are forgiven thee. Go thy way, walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments. Behold, I am the Lord of glory. I was crucified for the world that all those who believe on my name may have eternal life. Behold, the world lieth in sin at this time, and none doeth good, no not one. They have turned aside from the gospel and keep not my commandments. They draw near to me with their lips while their hearts are far from me. And mine anger is kindling against the inhabitants of the earth to visit them according to this ungodliness and to bring to pass that which hath been spoken by the mouth of the prophets and apostles. Behold and lo, I come quickly, as is written of me, in the cloud, clothed



The Sacred Grove, near Palmyra, New York

in the glory of my Father.’ And my soul was filled with love, and for many days I could rejoice with great joy and the Lord was with me but could find none that would believe the heavenly vision” (Joseph Smith, “Kirtland Letter Book” [MS, LDS Historian’s Library], 1829–1835, 1–6, cited in Dean C. Jessee, “The Early Accounts of Joseph Smith’s First Vision,” *BYU Studies*, vol. 9, no. 3, Spring 1969, 279–80; the original spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar have been altered to conform to contemporary usage).

## Joseph Smith Was Persecuted and Ridiculed for His Witness That God Had Spoken to Him [1.5]

Revelation, so long absent, had returned, but Joseph Smith’s sincere claim of new revelation incurred immediate and seeming universal wrath (see Joseph Smith—History 1:21–26). Lucy Mack Smith, the Prophet’s mother, wrote that from the time of the First Vision in the spring of 1820 “until the twenty-first of September, 1823, Joseph continued, as usual, to labor with his father, and nothing during this interval occurred of very great importance—though he suffered every kind of opposition and persecution from the different orders of religionists” (*History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, 101).

## Joseph Smith Remained Humble [1.6]

The heavens had opened and Joseph Smith had seen the Father and the Son. Instead of claiming superior holiness and encouraging the adulation of the masses, he wrote:

“I continued to pursue my common vocations in life . . . , all the time suffering severe persecution at the hands of all classes of men, both religious and irreligious, because I continued to affirm that I had seen a vision.

“ . . . Having been forbidden to join any of the religious sects of the day, and being of very tender years, and persecuted by those who ought to have been my friends and to have treated me kindly, and if they supposed me to be deluded to have endeavored in a proper and affectionate manner to have reclaimed me—I was left to all kinds of temptations; and, mingling with all kinds of society, I frequently fell into many foolish errors, and displayed the weakness of youth, and the foibles of human nature; which, I am sorry to say, led me into divers temptations, offensive in the sight of God. In making this confession, no one need suppose me guilty of any great or malignant sins. A disposition to commit such was never in my nature. But I was guilty of levity,



"I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it" (Joseph Smith—History 1:25).

and sometimes associated with jovial company, etc., not consistent with that character which ought to be maintained by one who was called of God as I had been. But this will not seem very strange to any one who recollects my youth, and is acquainted with my native cheery temperament" (Joseph Smith—History 1:27–28).

Some enemies of the **Prophet Joseph Smith** and the Church have tried to infer from Joseph's honest evaluation of himself that he was not worthy of his calling. He gave the following response to such critics:

"During this time, as is common to most, or all youths, I fell into many vices and follies; but as my accusers are, and have been forward to accuse me of being guilty of gross and outrageous violations of the peace and good order of the community, I take the occasion to remark that, though as I have said above, 'as is common to most, or all youths, I fell into many vices and follies.' I have not, neither can it be sustained, in truth, been guilty of wronging or injuring any man or society of men; and those imperfections to which I allude, and for which I have often had occasion to lament, were a light, and too often, vain mind, exhibiting a foolish and trifling conversation.

" . . . I do not, nor never have, pretended to be any other than a man 'subject to passion,' and liable, without the assisting grace of the Savior, to deviate from that perfect path in which all men are commanded to walk" (*History of the Church*, 1:10).

## Many Angels Visited Joseph Smith [1.7]

In 1823 the angel Moroni visited Joseph Smith and commenced to teach about the Restoration and the role he was to play in it (see Joseph Smith—History 1:29–50). As the Restoration unfolded, the Prophet was instructed by divers (various) angels and ancients who had held priesthood keys, "all declaring their dispensation, their rights, their keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the power of their priesthood" (D&C 128:21).

## Joseph Told His Father about Moroni's Visit [1.8]

The Prophet Joseph Smith's mother, Lucy Mack Smith, wrote about what happened after Moroni's visit:

"The next day Joseph, his father, and his brother Alvin were reaping in the field together. Suddenly, Joseph stopped and seemed to be in a deep study for some time. Alvin hurried him, saying, 'Joseph, you must keep to work or we shall not get our task done.' Joseph worked again diligently, then stopped in the same way a second



The heavenly messenger Moroni appeared to the 17-year-old Joseph Smith during the night of September 21, 1823.

time. When his father saw that Joseph was very pale, he urged him to go to the house and tell his mother that he was sick. He went a short distance till he came to a beautiful green under an apple tree. Here he lay down on his face, for he was so weak he could go no farther.

“He was here but a short time, when the messenger whom he had seen the night before came to him again and said, ‘Why did you not tell your father what I told you?’ Joseph said he was afraid his father would not believe him. ‘He will believe every word you say to him,’ said the angel.

“Joseph then promised to do as he was told by the angel and rose up and returned to the field, where he had left my husband and Alvin. . . . Joseph rehearsed all that had passed between him and the angel the previous night. Having heard this account, his father charged him not to fail in attending strictly to the instruction which he had received from this heavenly messenger” (*History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, 108–9; see also Joseph Smith—History 1:48–54).

## He Received a Father’s Blessing [1.9]

Joseph Smith Sr. gave his son unqualified support when Joseph told him about his visions and assignments from heavenly messengers. Some of young Joseph’s support came as fatherly warnings to be very careful not to fail in his important mission. The Prophet’s father learned by revelation that Joseph would continue faithful and live to fulfill his mission completely. In his dying blessing to Joseph he said:

“Joseph, my son, you are called to a high and holy calling. You are called to do the work of the Lord. Now, hold out faithful and you will be blessed, and your family shall be blessed, and your children after you. You shall live to finish your work.”

“At this Joseph cried out, ‘Oh, Father, shall I?’

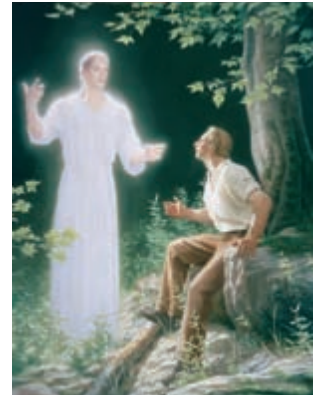
“‘Yes,’ said his father, ‘you shall. You shall live to lay out all the plan of all the work that God requires at your hand. Be faithful to the end. This is my dying blessing on your head in the name of Jesus. I also confirm your former blessing upon you, for it shall be fulfilled. Even so. Amen’” (quoted in Smith, *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, 434).



Joseph Smith Sr. supported and encouraged his son Joseph to perform all the assignments given by the heavenly messengers.

## Heavenly Tutors Were Sent to Joseph [1.10]

President Joseph F. Smith wrote: “Joseph Smith was an unlearned youth, so far as the learning of the world is concerned. He was taught by the angel Moroni. He received his education from above, from God Almighty, and not from man-made institutions; but to charge him with being ignorant would be both unjust and false; no man or combination of men possessed greater intelligence than he, nor could the combined wisdom and cunning of the age produce an equivalent for what he did. He was not ignorant, for he was taught by him from whom all intelligence flows. He possessed a knowledge of God and of his law, and of eternity” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [1939], 484).



Many heavenly messengers were sent to tutor Joseph Smith.

## He Married Emma Hale [1.11]

While Joseph Smith awaited the appointed time to remove the plates and begin translation of the Book of Mormon, he worked for a man named Josiah Stowell. During this employment, Joseph boarded in the home of Mr. Isaac Hale in Harmony, Pennsylvania. “Isaac Hale had a daughter, Emma, a good girl of high mind and devout feelings. This worthy young woman and Joseph formed a mutual attachment, and her father was requested to give his permission to their marriage. Mr. Hale opposed their desire for a time, as he was prosperous while Joseph’s people had lost their property; and it was on the 18th day of January, 1827, the last year of waiting for the plates, before Joseph and Emma could accomplish their desired union. On that day they were married by one Squire [Tarbell], at the residence of that gentleman, in South Bainbridge, in Chenango County, New York. Immediately after the marriage, Joseph left the employ of Mr. [Stowell] and journeyed with his wife to his parental home at Manchester, where during the succeeding summer, he worked to obtain means for his family and his mission. The time was near at hand for the great promise to be fulfilled and for his patience and faithfulness to be rewarded” (George Q. Cannon, *Life of Joseph Smith the Prophet*, Classics in Mormon Literature series [1986], 43).



Emma Hale was born July 10, 1804, to Isaac and Elizabeth Hale. She was 22 years old when she married Joseph Smith. She was well educated and an excellent seamstress and singer.

## The Plates Were Translated [1.12]

On September 22, 1827, the Prophet Joseph Smith obtained the plates upon which the Book of Mormon was written. In the face of relentless opposition, he had custody of these sacred plates for about 18 months. While translating the Book of Mormon, he was assisted by several scribes—Martin Harris, Emma, her brother Jesse Hale, and Oliver Cowdery.



Early photograph of the Hill Cumorah, 1906

## The First 116 Pages Were Lost [1.13]

The translation of the plates presented Joseph Smith with many lessons and challenges. Early in the translation effort, Joseph allowed his scribe Martin Harris to take the 116 manuscript pages that contained the translation from the plates to that point. The **Prophet Joseph Smith** wrote the following about what happened:

“Some time after Mr. Harris had begun to write for me, he began to importune me to give him liberty to carry the writings home and show them; and desired of me that I would inquire of the Lord, through the Urim and Thummim, if he might not do so. I did inquire, and the answer was that he must not. However, he was not satisfied with this answer, and desired that I should inquire again. I did so, and the answer was as before. Still he could not be contented, but insisted that I should inquire once more. After much solicitation I again inquired of the Lord, and permission was granted him to have the writings on certain conditions; which were, that he show them only to his brother, Preserved Harris, his own wife, his father and his mother, and a Mrs. Cobb, a sister to his wife. In accordance with this last answer, I required of him that he should bind himself in a covenant to me in a most solemn manner that he would not do otherwise than had been directed. He did so. He bound himself as I required of him, took the writings, and went his way. Notwithstanding, however, the great restrictions which he had been laid under, and the solemnity of the covenant which he [Martin Harris] had made with me, he did show them to others, and by stratagem they got them away from him, and they never have been recovered unto this day” (*History of the Church*, 1:21).

Lucy Mack Smith wrote the following about what happened after Martin Harris took the 116 translated pages of the Book of Mormon:

“Immediately after Mr. Harris’s departure, Emma became the mother of a son, but she had but small comfort from the society of the dear little stranger, for he was very soon snatched from her arms and borne aloft to the world of spirits before he had time to learn good or evil. For some time, the mother seemed to tremble upon the verge of the silent home of her infant. So uncertain seemed her fate for a season that, in the space of two weeks, Joseph never slept one hour in undisturbed quiet. At the expiration of this time she began to recover, but as Joseph’s anxiety about her began to subside, another cause of trouble forced itself upon his mind. Mr. Harris had been absent nearly three weeks, and Joseph had received no intelligence whatever from him, which was altogether



Martin Harris

aside of the arrangement when they separated. He determined that as soon as his wife gained a little more strength, he would make a trip to New York and see after the manuscript. He did not mention the subject to Emma for fear of agitating her mind in her delicate health.

"In a few days, however, she soon manifested that

she was not without her thoughts upon the subject. . . .

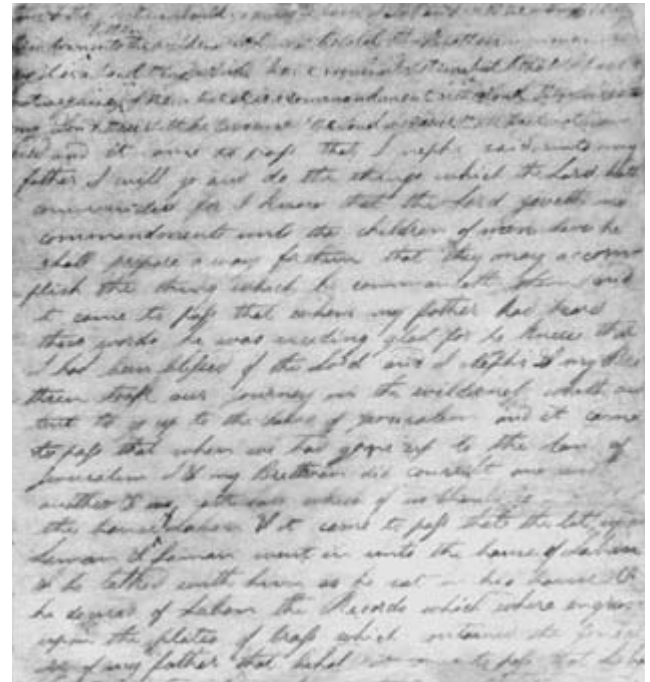
"After much persuasion, he concluded to leave his wife in the care of her mother for a few days, and set out on the before-mentioned journey" (*History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, 161–62).

Martin Harris had lost the 116 manuscript pages, which contained the translation of the book of Lehi. The Prophet was extremely distressed. In just a short time he had lost his newborn son, almost lost his wife, and now, the 116 pages. His mother described his reaction when Martin Harris told him of the loss:

"'Oh, my God, my God!' said Joseph, clinching his hands together. 'All is lost, is lost! What shall I do? I have sinned. It is I who tempted the wrath of God by asking for that which I had no right to ask, as I was differently



In 1822, Joseph's elder brother Alvin began building a nine-room frame home so that his parents might live more comfortably. He became ill and died in November 1823. The home was eventually finished in the fall of 1825, and the Smiths lived there until April 1829. This is where Joseph brought the metal plates and hid them beneath the hearthstone.



The Book of Mormon manuscript containing 1 Nephi 2:23–3:18. The first part of the page was written by Oliver Cowdery and the remaining was written possibly by John Whitmer. This was part of the small plates, which were translated to replace the lost 116 manuscript pages.

instructed by the angel.' And he wept and groaned, walking the floor continually.

"At last he told Martin to go back to his house and search again. 'No,' said Mr. Harris, 'it is all in vain, for I have looked in every place in the house. I have even ripped open beds and pillows, and I know it is not there.'

"'Then must I,' said Joseph, 'return to my wife with such a tale as this? I dare not do it lest I should kill her at once. And how shall I appear before the Lord? Of what rebuke am I not worthy from the angel of the Most High?' . . .

"I well remember that day of darkness, both within and without. To us, at least, the heavens seemed clothed with blackness, and the earth shrouded with gloom. I have often said within myself that if a continual punishment, as severe as that which we experienced on that occasion, were to be inflicted upon the most wicked characters who ever stood upon the footstool of the Almighty—if even their punishment were no greater than that, I should feel to pity their condition" (Smith, *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, 165–66, 171).

## The Loss Was a Learning Experience [1.14]

The Prophet Joseph Smith remained with his parents “for a short season” after he learned of the loss of the 116 pages. He wrote: “[I] then returned to my place in Pennsylvania. Immediately after my return home, I was walking out a little distance, when, behold, the former heavenly messenger appeared and handed me the Urim and Thummim again—for it had been taken from me in consequence of my having wearied the Lord in asking for the privilege of letting Martin Harris take the writings, which he lost by transgression—and I inquired of the Lord through it” (*History of the Church*, 1:21–22).

The Prophet received the revelation found in Doctrine and Covenants 3, which contained the following rebuke from the Lord: “For although a man may have many revelations, and have power to do many mighty works, yet if he boasts in his own strength, and sets at naught the counsels of God, and follows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires, he must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him” (D&C 3:4). Yet even in the rebuke there was hope. The Lord told Joseph that his privileges would be taken away only “for a season” (v. 14).

Joseph Smith’s repentance was deep and sincere, and his privileges were soon restored. He wrote that after he received the former revelation, “both the plates and the Urim and Thummim were taken from me again; but in a few days they were returned to me, when I inquired of the Lord and the Lord said thus to me” (*History of the Church*, 1:23). He then received the revelation found in Doctrine and Covenants 10. In that revelation the Lord made it clear that Satan had an influence in the loss of the manuscript but that God’s “wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil” (D&C 10:43).

## A New Scribe Was Provided [1.15]

During the winter of 1828–29, the Prophet Joseph Smith periodically worked on the translation of the Book of Mormon with the help of Emma and her brother, but earning a living left little time for translating. In March of 1829, the Prophet prayed earnestly for help to complete the translation. The Lord told Joseph to stop translating until He provided help (see D&C 5:30, 34).

Oliver Cowdery was a teacher at the village school in Manchester township and boarded at the home of Joseph Smith Sr. While in Manchester he heard much about Joseph Smith Jr. and the gold plates. After gaining the Smith family’s trust, Oliver spoke with Joseph Smith Sr., who told him about the plates. Oliver prayed privately



Oliver Cowdery

and meditated upon the matter. He told Joseph Smith Sr. that “it had been put into his heart that he would have the privilege of writing for Joseph,” whom he had not yet met. He told the Smith family that he would go with Samuel to visit Joseph in the spring, after the school term. He said, “I firmly believe that if it is the will of the Lord that I should go, and that there is a work for me to do in this thing, I am determined to attend to it” (Smith, *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, 181–82).

Samuel Smith and Oliver Cowdery arrived in Harmony, Pennsylvania, on April 5, 1829, and the Prophet Joseph Smith recognized Oliver as being the assistance the Lord had promised. On Tuesday, April 7, they began the work of translation and labored on it throughout April. With Oliver’s help, Joseph proceeded faster than ever before. During the next three months, they translated approximately 500 printed pages of the Book of Mormon.

## The Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods Were Restored [1.16]

On May 15, 1829, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery went to the woods to pray for understanding about baptism, a subject they found mentioned during their translation of the Book of Mormon. While they were praying, John the Baptist “descended in a cloud of light” (Joseph Smith—History 1:68; see vv. 66–75). He



After the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery baptized each other in the Susquehanna River.



Peter, James, and John restored the Melchizedek Priesthood.

conferred the Aaronic Priesthood on Joseph and Oliver. Later, Peter, James, and John conferred the Melchizedek Priesthood upon Joseph and Oliver, restoring the power to establish the kingdom of God upon the earth once more (see D&C 128:20). “The day, month, and year designation that so precisely identifies the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood (May 15, 1829) is absent in the case of the Melchizedek Priesthood. Similarly, knowledge of the attendant circumstances of that restoration is limited. Even so, sufficient elements of the historical puzzle can be put together to give us a close approximation of the time sequence. Evidence suggests a date within the 13-day period from May 16 to May 28, 1829” (Larry C. Porter, “The Restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1996, 33).

### Keys of the Kingdom Were Bestowed [1.17]

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, then a member of the First Council of the Seventy, said: “Peter, James and John came to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. When they came they did three things. They conferred upon Joseph and Oliver the Melchizedek Priesthood. This is power and authority. They gave them the Keys of the Kingdom of God. In other words, they gave them the right to preside in the Melchizedek Priesthood and over the kingdom of God on earth which is the church of Jesus Christ. Now,

it did not exist yet, but they had the right to preside over it. Then Peter, James and John gave Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery what is called the Keys of the dispensation of the fulness of times. That means the right to preside over the dispensation and direct all of the labors in spiritual things of all the people who ever live in this dispensation of the earth’s history” (“The Keys of the Kingdom” [address at Wilford Stake priesthood meeting, Feb. 21, 1955], 3).

### The Church Was Organized [1.18]

On April 6, 1830, after the restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods, the kingdom of God was once again established upon the earth when the Church was legally organized in the Peter Whitmer home in Fayette, New York. The work of the Church began, under the direction of a prophet with power to lead the kingdom of God through its opening years. During the following years the Prophet Joseph Smith received more revelations, called more missionaries, and gathered converts together. Newspapers were established, property was purchased, crops were planted, businesses were chartered, and industry was commenced.



The reconstructed Peter Whitmer home in Fayette township, New York. The translation of the Book of Mormon was completed here, the testimony of the Three Witnesses was signed here, the Church was organized here, and 20 of the revelations included in the Doctrine and Covenants were received here.

### The Saints Were Commanded to Build a Temple [1.19]

Church members gained converts by sharing the gospel message with relatives and friends. Many had been gathered to Fayette, Palmyra, Colesville, and other settlements of western New York. Later, the Saints were commanded to move westward to Kirtland, Ohio. The means of the members were taxed to the limit in caring



The Kirtland Temple is 79 feet long, 59 feet wide, and 50 feet high. The tower reaches 110 feet above the ground.

for the growing Church population in Kirtland and the surrounding counties. They were largely penniless and destitute. Among these challenges came the Lord's command to build a temple: "Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God" (D&C 88:119).

A committee was appointed to collect funds for the building of the temple. The Prophet Joseph Smith knew that the spiritual survival of this last gospel dispensation depended upon the spiritual endowment that God had promised to pour out upon the Saints when the temple was completed. Of Joseph's faithfulness in this, **President Brigham Young** later declared:

"The Church, through our beloved Prophet Joseph, was commanded to build a temple to the Most High, in Kirtland, Ohio. Joseph not only received revelation and commandment to build a temple, but he received a pattern also. . . .

"Without revelation, Joseph could not know what was wanted, any more than any other man, and, without commandment, the Church were too few in number, too weak in faith, and too poor in purse, to attempt such a mighty enterprise. But by means of all these stimulants, a mere handful of men, living on air, and a little hominy and milk, and often salt or no salt, when milk could not be had; the great Prophet Joseph, in the stone quarry, quarrying rock with his own hands; and the few then in the Church, following his example of obedience and diligence wherever most needed; with laborers on the walls, holding the sword in one hand to

protect themselves from the mob, while they placed the stone and moved the trowel with the other, the Kirtland temple . . . was so far completed as to be dedicated. And those first Elders who helped to build it, received a portion of their first endowments, or we might say more clearly, some of the first, or introductory, or initiatory ordinances, preparatory to an endowment" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [1954], 415).

## Miraculous Manifestations Accompanied the Building and Dedication of the Kirtland Temple [1.20]

Spiritual blessings were poured out upon the Saints as the Kirtland temple was being completed. The **Prophet Joseph Smith** wrote of a great spiritual outpouring that occurred on January 21, 1836:

"At early candle-light I met with the Presidency at the west school room, in the Temple, to attend to the ordinance of anointing our heads with holy oil; also the Councils of Kirtland and Zion met in the two adjoining rooms, and waited in prayer while we attended to the ordinance. . . .

"Many of my brethren who received the ordinance with me saw glorious visions also. Angels ministered unto them as well as to myself, and the power of the Highest rested upon us, the house was filled with the glory of God, and we shouted Hosanna to God and the Lamb. My scribe also received his anointing with us, and saw,



Many spiritual experiences, revelations, and heavenly manifestations were received within the Kirtland Temple.

in a vision, the armies of heaven protecting the Saints in their return to Zion, and many things which I saw. . . .

“The visions of heaven were opened to [the high councilors of Kirtland and Zion, who were invited into the room] also. Some of them saw the face of the Savior, and others were ministered unto by holy angels, and the spirit of prophecy and revelation was poured out in mighty power; and loud hosannas, and glory to God in the highest, saluted the heavens, for we all communed with the heavenly host. And I saw in my vision all of the Presidency in the celestial kingdom of God, and many others that were present” (*History of the Church*, 2:379, 381–82).

The Kirtland Temple was dedicated on March 27, 1836. In his final note of the marvelous events that occurred on that day, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** wrote concerning an evening meeting held in the newly dedicated temple: “Brother George A. Smith arose and began to prophesy, when a noise was heard like the sound of a rushing mighty wind, which filled the Temple, and all the congregation simultaneously arose, being moved upon by an invisible power; many began to speak in tongues and prophesy; others saw glorious visions; and I beheld the Temple was filled with angels, which fact I declared to the congregation. The people of the neighborhood came running together (hearing an unusual sound within, and seeing a bright light like a pillar of fire resting upon the Temple), and were astonished at what was taking place. This continued until the meeting closed at eleven p.m.” (*History of the Church*, 2:428).

On April 3, 1836, the Savior appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple and accepted it as His house; Moses, Elias, and Elijah also appeared and restored priesthood keys (see D&C 110).

## Dealing with Poverty and Apostasy in Kirtland [1.21]

Church members enjoyed a great spiritual outpouring at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. Yet, within two years they were forced to leave their temple and the beautiful community they had built. The cause of this had its roots in the challenges they faced as new members settling in Kirtland, Ohio. Many converts were anxious to start a new life in Kirtland and had little means after they exhausted their resources moving to the area. Regardless of these problems, a spirit of optimism filled Kirtland after the temple dedication, as ambitious Church members attempted to correct the impoverished conditions.



**John Johnson farm home.** In September 1831, Joseph and Emma accepted an invitation from John and Mary Johnson to live with them on their 100-acre farm in Hyrum, Ohio. The farm was about 30 miles from Kirtland. While living with the Johnsons, the Prophet Joseph recorded 15 revelations, which included the visions now found in *Doctrine and Covenants* 76. It was here that Joseph and Sidney Rigdon accomplished much of their work related to the inspired revision of the Bible.

During this period, from 1836 to 1838, a number of banks were being organized in the United States. The leaders of the Church petitioned the state of Ohio for permission to start a bank, but a charter was denied. It was decided that it would be beneficial to form a banking society that would assist the community with its financial concerns. They called it the Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company. The Prophet Joseph Smith served as the treasurer of the organization.

The bank printed its own bank notes and opened for business in January 1837. Trouble soon surfaced when other banks refused to accept the bank notes. This, coupled with the economic situation in Kirtland, unwise speculators, the United States’ own banking problems (known as the Panic of 1837), and creditors who did not invest in the society as promised, caused its failure.

Many blamed Joseph Smith and a number of members apostatized, considering him to be a fallen prophet. Later, the Prophet’s life was threatened and he and other Church leaders were forced to flee to Missouri. The Prophet left Kirtland in January 1838 for Far West, Missouri. Most members of the Church left their homes in Kirtland to follow the prophet. The focal point of the Church then shifted from Kirtland, Ohio, to Missouri, where many members had started moving to as early as 1831.



Painting by Dan Wegeland

Joseph Smith rebuking the guards in the Richmond Jail

## He Was Tried in Richmond and Imprisoned in Liberty Jail [1.22]

In November of 1838, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** and other Church leaders were taken prisoner on false charges and tried in Richmond, Missouri. A number of bitter witnesses testified against them, and when defense witnesses were identified, they were jailed or driven from the area so they could not testify. For two weeks the prisoners took heavy abuse. **Elder Parley P. Pratt**, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, reported that one night they had listened for hours to the unspeakable persecutions that the guards claimed they had inflicted upon the Saints:

“I had listened till I became so disgusted, shocked, horrified, and so filled with the spirit of indignant justice that I could scarcely refrain from rising upon my feet and rebuking the guards; but had said nothing to Joseph, or any one else, although I lay next to him and knew he was awake. On a sudden he arose to his feet, and spoke in a voice of thunder, or as the roaring lion, uttering, as near as I can recollect, the following words:

*“SILENCE, ye fiends of the infernal pit. In the name of Jesus Christ I rebuke you, and command you to be still; I will not live another minute and bear such language. Cease such talk, or you or I die THIS INSTANT!”*

“He ceased to speak. He stood erect in terrible majesty. Chained, and without a weapon; calm, unruffled and dignified as an angel, he looked upon the quailing guards, whose weapons were lowered or dropped to the ground; whose knees smote together, and who, shrinking into a corner, or crouching at his feet, begged his pardon, and remained quiet till a change of guards” (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, ed. Parley P. Pratt, Classics in Mormon Literature series [1985], 179–80).

After the trial in Richmond, Joseph Smith and several other Church leaders were sent to Liberty Jail, in Clay

County, Missouri. They spent the winter incarcerated in Liberty Jail, from December 1838 to April 1839. On April 16, 1839, they were allowed to escape and joined the Saints who had been driven from Missouri to Quincy, Illinois.

While in prison, the Prophet Joseph heard reports of the persecutions and suffering of the Saints. This troubled him deeply. He prayed fervently and frequently on their behalf. In March 1839 he pleaded with the Lord with deep concern:

“O God, where art thou? And where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place?

“How long shall thy hand be stayed, and thine eye, yea thy pure eye, behold from the eternal heavens the wrongs of thy people and of thy servants, and thine ear be penetrated with their cries?” (D&C 121:1–2).

The Lord’s answer came beginning with Doctrine and Covenants 121:7 (see also D&C 122).



**Liberty Jail.** The Prophet Joseph and several other Church leaders were confined in a cold, dark, dirty, 14-foot-square cellar room of the jail called the “dungeon.” The outer walls of the jail were gray limestone rock and two feet thick, with a sturdy inner wall of hewn oak timbers. The jail was constructed in 1833 and was used for 23 years.

## The Saints Find Refuge at Nauvoo [1.23]

Kirtland, Ohio, was the headquarters of the Church from February 1831 until January 1838, when the Prophet Joseph Smith moved to Far West, Missouri. In 1838–39 the Saints were forced to leave Missouri and sought refuge in Illinois. There they purchased land and established the city of Nauvoo. Thousands gathered there and Nauvoo was one of the fastest growing cities in Illinois at that time. In 1844, because none of the other candidates would adequately support the cause of the Latter-day Saints as they sought redress for their losses during the persecutions in Missouri, Joseph Smith announced his candidacy for president of the United States of America.

## The Prophet Knew More Than He Was Permitted to Teach [1.24]

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** was not allowed to teach everything that the Lord revealed to him. He explained that we receive knowledge when we are prepared to receive it:

“[The Apostle] Paul ascended into the third heavens, and he could understand the three principal rounds of Jacob’s ladder—the telestial, the terrestrial, and the celestial glories or kingdoms, where Paul saw and heard things which were not lawful for him to utter. I could explain a hundred fold more than I ever have of the glories of the kingdoms manifested to me in the vision, were I permitted, and were the people prepared to receive them.

“The Lord deals with this people as a tender parent with a child, communicating light and intelligence and the knowledge of his ways as they can bear it. The inhabitants of the earth are asleep: they know not the day of their visitation” (*History of the Church*, 5:402).

“There has been a great difficulty in getting anything into the heads of this generation. . . . Even the Saints are slow to understand.

“I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God; but we frequently see some of them, after suffering all they have for the work of God, will fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions: they cannot stand the fire at all. How many will be able to abide a celestial law, and go through and receive their exaltation, I am unable to say, as many are called, but few are chosen” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 520).

The Prophet also explained that “God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what He will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least Saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them” (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 268).

## Many of the Saints Did Not Understand the Magnitude of Joseph Smith’s Calling [1.25]

Through the **Prophet Joseph Smith**, the Lord restored truths that had been lost. But, as Joseph Smith explained, not all people will understand and accept those truths:

“Many men will say, ‘I will never forsake you, but will stand by you at all times.’ But the moment you teach them some of the mysteries of the kingdom of God that are retained in the heavens and are to be revealed to the



Brigham Young said, “What a delight it was to hear br. Joseph talk upon the great principles of eternity” (“Discourse,” *Deseret News Weekly*, Oct. 1, 1856, 235).

children of men when they are prepared for them, they will be the first to stone you and put you to death. It was this same principle that crucified the Lord Jesus Christ, and will cause the people to kill the prophets in this generation. . . .

“There are a great many wise men and women too in our midst who are too wise to be taught; therefore they must die in their ignorance, and in the resurrection they will find their mistake. Many seal up the door of heaven by saying, So far God may reveal and I will believe” (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 202).

The Prophet Joseph Smith sought diligently to teach the truths of the Restoration and firmly establish the kingdom of God throughout the earth. While he was a prisoner in Liberty Jail, the Lord told him:

“The ends of the earth shall inquire after thy name, and fools shall have thee in derision, and hell shall rage against thee;

“While the pure in heart, and the wise, and the noble, and the virtuous, shall seek counsel, and authority, and blessings constantly from under thy hand” (D&C 122:1–2).

Addressing an assembly of thousands a few months before his death, the **Prophet Joseph Smith** declared:

“You don’t know me; you never knew my heart. No man knows my history. I cannot tell it: I shall never undertake it. I don’t blame any one for not believing my history. If I had not experienced what I have, I would not have believed it myself. I never did harm any man since I was born in the world. My voice is always for peace.

“I cannot lie down until all my work is finished. I never think any evil, nor do anything to the harm of my fellow-man. When I am called by the trump of the archangel and weighed in the balance, you will all know me then. I add no more” (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 525).

## Joseph Smith Loved Physical Contests [1.26]

“There were few manly sports that [the Prophet Joseph Smith] didn’t have a try at, and many in which he excelled. For example, he wrestled, and wrestled effectively. He jumped at the mark. In this activity you simply drew a mark on the ground, then jumped and marked



Pulling sticks

where you landed, then challenged someone else to match or exceed the jump. He pulled up stakes: Here two men faced each other, placing feet against feet, and then pulled; the stronger one remained on the ground, the other came up. There’s another version of that in which, face to face, you hold a pole, like a broomstick, and then pull down. The stronger of the two holds, and his hands don’t slip. The weaker’s hands slip.

“With the boys Joseph often played baseball and variations on quoits [a game similar to the game of horseshoes, often using a flat stone as the object to throw]. He was known to create games with prizes, including booby prizes. On occasion, especially when he had beaten a challenger, he would say something like, ‘You must not mind this. When I am with the boys I make all the fun I can for them’ [see recollection of Calvin W. Moore in *The Juvenile Instructor*, April 15, 1892, 255]” (Truman G. Madsen, *Joseph Smith the Prophet* [1989], 20–21).

## The Prophet Joseph Smith Holds the Keys of This Dispensation [1.27]

**President George Q. Cannon**, who was a counselor in the First Presidency, stated: “The Prophet Joseph informs us in his letter, addressed to the Saints when he fled away from Nauvoo to escape the hands of his enemies, that ‘It is necessary in the ushering in of the dispensation of the fulness of times, which dispensation is now beginning to usher in, that a whole and complete and perfect union, and welding together of dispensations, and keys, and powers, and glories should take place, and be revealed from the days of Adam even to the present time.’ [D&C 128:18.] He, therefore, received the ministration of divers angels—heads of dispensations—from Michael or Adam down to the present time; every man in his time and season coming to him, and all declaring their dispensation, their rights, their keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the power of their Priesthood. So that Joseph, the head of this dispensation, Prophet, Seer and Revelator, whom God raised up, received from all these different sources, according to the mind and will of God, and according to the design of God concerning him; he received from all these different sources all the power and all the authority and all keys that were necessary for the building up of the work of God in the last days, and for the accomplishment of His purposes connected with this dispensation. He stands at the head. He is a unique character, differing from every other man in this respect, and excelling every other man. Because he was the head God chose him, and while he was faithful no man could take his place and position. He was faithful, and died faithful. *He stands therefore at the head of this*



The Mansion House, Nauvoo, Illinois. Joseph and Emma Smith moved into the Mansion House on August 31, 1843. The house was designed for the Prophet's family and to entertain guests and conduct Church and civic business. The 22-room structure featured a southern wing that served as a hotel. The wing had a large living room and kitchen on the ground floor, plus sleeping rooms on the second story. The wing was torn down in 1890.

*dispensation, and will throughout all eternity, and no man can take that power away from him. If any man holds these keys, he holds them subordinate to him. You never heard President Young teach any other doctrine; he always said that Joseph stood at the head of this dispensation; that Joseph holds the keys; that although Joseph had gone behind the veil he stood at the head of this dispensation, and that he himself held the keys subordinate to him. President Taylor teaches the same doctrine, and you will never hear any other doctrine from any of the faithful Apostles or servants of God, who understand the order of the holy Priesthood. If we get our salvation we shall have to pass by him; if we enter into our glory it will be through the authority that he has received. We cannot get around him"* ("Discourse," *Deseret News Weekly*, Feb. 21, 1883, 66; italics added).

### The Church Will Fill the World [1.28]

On April 6, 1830, the day of its organization in Fayette, New York, few people might have understood how large the Church would grow. President Wilford Woodruff spoke of hearing the Prophet Joseph Smith speak of how the Church would grow to fill the world:

"I had just been baptized. . . . I arrived in Kirtland on Saturday and there met with Joseph and Hyrum Smith in the street. I was introduced to Joseph Smith. It was the first time that I had ever seen him in my life. He invited me home to spend the Sabbath with him, and I did so. They had meeting on Sunday.

"On Sunday night the Prophet called on all who held the Priesthood to gather into the little log school house they had there. It was a small house, perhaps 14 feet square. But it held the whole of the Priesthood of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who were then in the town of Kirtland, and who had gathered together to go off in Zion's camp. That was the first time I ever saw Oliver Cowdery, or heard him speak; the first time I ever saw Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball, and the two Pratts, and Orson Hyde and many others. There were no Apostles in the Church then except Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. When we got together the Prophet called upon the Elders of Israel with him to bear testimony of this work. Those that I have named spoke, and a good many that I have not named, bore their testimonies. When they got through the Prophet said, 'Brethren I have been very much edified and instructed in your testimonies here tonight, but I want to say to you before the Lord, that you know no more concerning the destinies of this Church and kingdom than a babe upon its mother's lap. You don't comprehend it.' I was rather surprised. He said 'it is only a little handful of Priesthood you see here tonight, but this Church will fill North and South America—it will fill the world'" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1898, 57).

### He Was a Prophet, Seer, Revelator, Restorer, Witness, and Martyr [1.29]

With authority from God, the Prophet Joseph Smith laid the foundation for a mighty restoration in the last days preparatory to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Yet, like many prophets before him, he faced great opposition and gave his life for the kingdom of God. He was ridiculed, mobbed, and beaten—carrying scars of



The Prophet Joseph and his brother Hyrum. "In life they were not divided, and in death they were not separated!" (D&C 135:3).



Carthage Jail, Carthage, Illinois

persecution to his grave. Six of his and Emma's eleven children, two of whom they adopted, died in infancy. Many people who were once his friends turned against him. Over 46 lawsuits were brought against him.

He spent months in jail on false charges. "When Joseph went to Carthage to deliver himself up to the pretended requirements of the law, two or three days previous to his assassination, he said: 'I am going like a lamb to the slaughter; but I am calm as a summer's morning; I have a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men. I SHALL DIE INNOCENT, AND IT SHALL YET BE SAID OF ME—HE WAS MURDERED IN COLD BLOOD'" (D&C 135:4). On June 27, 1844, an armed mob rushed the jail and killed the Prophet and his brother Hyrum. His work in mortality was completed. His last words were "*O Lord, my God!*" (D&C 135:1).

**President Joseph Fielding Smith** testified:

"Joseph Smith was a prophet, called in these last days to receive by revelation the saving truths of the gospel and to stand as a legal administrator, having power from on high, to administer the ordinances of the gospel.

"Since these truths revealed through him are the ones which shall go forth to every nation before the Second Coming, it is little wonder that we find Moroni saying to Joseph Smith that his 'name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people.' [Joseph Smith—History 1:33.]

"Nor is it any wonder when we later find the Lord saying to the Prophet: 'The ends of the earth shall inquire after thy name, and fools shall have thee in derision, and hell shall rage against thee;

"While the pure in heart, and the wise, and the noble, and the virtuous, shall seek counsel, and authority, and blessings constantly from under thy hand.'" (D&C 122:1–2.)

"The ends of the earth are now beginning to inquire after the name of Joseph Smith, and many people in many nations are rejoicing in the gospel restored through his instrumentality" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1970, 6).

Soon after the Prophet's martyrdom, **Elder John Taylor**, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, testified, "Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it" (D&C 135:3). People of all dispensations are affected by the work of the Restoration the Lord performed through that mighty prophet of this last dispensation. All who inquire earnestly and honestly can know that Joseph Smith was truly a prophet of the living God.

**Elder Gordon B. Hinckley**, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained: "We do not worship the Prophet. We worship God our Eternal Father, and the risen Lord Jesus Christ. But we acknowledge him, we proclaim him, we respect him, we reverence him as an instrument in the hands of the Almighty in restoring to the earth the ancient truths of the divine gospel, together with the priesthood through which the authority of God is exercised in the affairs of his church and for the blessing of his people" ("*Joseph the Seer,*" *Ensign*, May 1977, 65).



Martyrs



Death masks of the Prophet Joseph and his brother Hyrum. On June 28, 1844, the bodies of the martyrs were taken to the Nauvoo Mansion, accompanied by Willard Richards, Samuel Smith, and eight guards. A viewing was held that evening. It was common practice at that time for a plaster cast to be made of the facial features of prominent persons. The Church Historical Department possesses the original molds.

## “He Is the Great Prophet of This Dispensation” [1.30]

President Gordon B. Hinckley expressed gratitude for the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“How great indeed is our debt to him. His life began in Vermont and ended in Illinois, and marvelous were the things that happened between that simple beginning and tragic ending. It was he who brought us a true knowledge of God, the Eternal Father, and His Risen Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. During the short time of his great vision he learned more concerning the nature of Deity than all of those who through centuries had argued the matter in learned councils and scholarly forums. He brought us the marvelous Book of Mormon as another witness for the living reality of the Son of God. To him, from those who held it anciently, came the priesthood, the power, the gift, the authority, the keys to speak and act in the name of God. He gave us the organization of the Church and its great and sacred mission. Through him were restored the keys of the holy temples, that men and women might enter into eternal covenants with God and that the great work for the dead might be accomplished to open the way for eternal blessings. . . .



The Prophet Joseph Smith

“He was the instrument in the hands of the Almighty. He was the servant acting under the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ in bringing to pass this great latter-day work.

“We stand in reverence before him. He is the great prophet of this dispensation. He stands at the head of this great and mighty work which is spreading across the earth. He is our prophet, our revelator, our seer, our friend. Let us not forget him. . . . God be thanked for the Prophet Joseph” (“A Season for Gratitude,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1997, 2).



# Brigham Young

## Second President of the Church

# 2

### Highlights in the Life of Brigham Young

Age	Events
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	He was born June 1, 1801, in Whitingham, Windham County, Vermont, to John and Abigail Howe Young.
14	His mother died; he began to earn his own living and eventually became a carpenter (1815).
23	He married Miriam Works (Oct. 8, 1824).
30	He was baptized into the Church (April 14, 1832) and ordained an elder (1832).
31	His wife, Miriam, died (Sept. 8, 1832), leaving him to care for their two young daughters.
32	He married Mary Ann Angell (Feb. 18, 1834).
32–33	He was a captain in the march of Zion’s Camp (May–July 1834).
33	He was ordained one of the original members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles by the Three Witnesses (Feb. 14, 1835).
37	He led the Saints from Missouri to Illinois (1838–39).
38–40	He served a mission to Great Britain (Sept. 1839–July 1841).
38	He was sustained as President of the Quorum of the Twelve (Apr. 14, 1840).
43–46	As the senior Apostle, he led the Church after the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith (1844–47).
45	He received the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 136; he saw the Prophet Joseph Smith in vision (Jan. 14, 1847).
45–47	He led the exodus of the Saints to the Salt Lake Valley (Apr. 1847–Sept. 1848).
46	He returned to Winter Quarters (fall, 1847); the First Presidency was reorganized (Dec. 5, 1847); he became President of the Church on December 27, 1847, at Kanesville (now Council Bluffs), Iowa.
48	He founded the University of Deseret (Feb. 28, 1850), which later became the University of Utah.
49	He became governor of the Territory of Utah (Sept. 20, 1850).
51	He laid the cornerstone for the Salt Lake Temple (Apr. 6, 1853).
56–57	The Utah War; he was released as governor after an eight-year term (1857–58).
66	The Salt Lake Tabernacle was completed; the Union of Local Sunday Schools was organized (1867).
67	The railroad reached Utah (May 10, 1869).
68	The Young Ladies Retrenchment Association was organized (Nov. 28, 1869).
75	The St. George Utah Temple was dedicated under his direction (Apr. 6, 1877).
76	He died in Salt Lake City, Utah (Aug. 29, 1877).



Whittingham, Vermont

## His First Meeting of Joseph Smith [2.1]

Brigham Young was born four years before the Prophet Joseph Smith. He was baptized into the Church on April 14, 1832, near his home in Mendon, New York. In September of that year, shortly after the death of his wife, he traveled to Kirtland, Ohio, to meet the Prophet. Of that meeting **Brigham Young** wrote:

“We went to his father’s house and learned that he was in the woods, chopping. We immediately repaired to the woods, where we found the Prophet, and two or three of his brothers, chopping and hauling wood. Here my joy was full at the privilege of shaking the hand of the Prophet of God, and received the sure testimony, by the Spirit of prophecy, that he was all that any man could believe him to be, as a true Prophet. He was happy to see us, and bid us welcome. We soon returned to his house, he accompanying us.

“In the evening a few of the brethren came in, and we conversed together upon the things of the kingdom. He called upon me to pray; in my prayer I spoke in tongues. As soon as we arose from our knees the brethren flocked



Brigham Young loved the Prophet Joseph Smith. From their first meeting, they were loyal friends.

around him, and asked his opinion concerning the gift of tongues that was upon me. He told them it was the pure Adamic language. Some said to him they expected he would condemn the gift brother Brigham had, but he said, ‘No, it is of God, and the time will come when brother Brigham Young will preside over this Church.’ The latter part of this conversation was in my absence” (*Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1801–1844*, comp. Elden Jay Watson [1968], 4–5).

**Brigham Young** later said, “I feel like shouting Hallelujah, all the time, when I think that I ever knew Joseph Smith, the Prophet whom the Lord raised up and ordained, and to whom he gave keys and power to build up the Kingdom of God on earth and sustain it” (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [1954], 458).

Times and circumstances rarely thrust a man into the position that Brigham Young found himself after the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith on June 27, 1844, as the Lord revealed His will concerning the succession of leadership in the developing Church and moved the Saints westward.

## Brigham Young Knew the Rigors of Life and Hard Work [2.2]

**Brigham Young** knew work, hardship, and privation. He gave the following insights into his childhood:

“At an early age I labored with my father, assisting him to clear off new land and cultivate his farm, passing through many hardships and privations incident to settling a new country” (*Manuscript History of Brigham Young*, 1).

“Br. Heber and I never went to school until we got into ‘Mormonism;’ that was the first of our schooling. We never had the opportunity of letters in our youth, but we had the privilege of picking up brush, chopping down trees, rolling logs and working amongst the roots, and of getting our shins, feet and toes bruised. The uncle of br. Merrell who now sits in the congregation made me the first hat that my father ever bought for me, and I was then about eleven years of age. I did not go bare-headed previous to that time, neither did I call on my father to buy me a five dollar hat every few months, as some of my boys do. My sisters would make me what was called a Jo. Johnson cap for winter, and in summer I wore a straw hat which I frequently braided for myself. I learned to make bread, wash the dishes, milk the cows and make butter, and can make butter, and can beat the most of the women in this community at house-keeping. Those are about all the advantages I gained in my youth. I know how to economise, for my father had to do it” (“Remarks,” *Deseret News Weekly*, Aug. 12, 1857, 180).



Brigham Young

“Instead of crying over our sufferings, as some seem inclined to do, I would rather tell a good story, and leave the crying to others. I do not know that I have ever suffered; I do not realize it. Have I not gone without eating and not half clad? Yes, but that was not suffering. I was used to that in my youth. I used to

work in the woods logging and driving team, summer and winter, not half clad, and with insufficient food until my stomach would ache, so that I am used to all this, and have had no suffering. As I said to the brethren the other night, the only suffering I ever realized in this Church was to preserve my temper towards my enemies. But I have even got pretty much over this” (“Discourse,” *Deseret News Weekly*, Oct. 21, 1868, 291).



This fireplace mantle was made by Brigham Young.

## He Excelled as a Craftsman [2.3]

At the age of 14, Brigham Young began work as an apprentice to a furniture maker and house painter. He excelled at the craft. During his apprenticeship, “he established himself as the skilled artisan who is famous in this city [Auburn, New York] for the beauty of his stairwell decorations, fanlight doorways, door frames, stair rails, louvered attic windows and, above all—fireplace mantels” (Mary Van Sickle Wait, *Brigham Young in Cayuga County, 1813–1829* [1964], 24).

## He Was a Devoted Husband and Father [2.4]

“Brigham met eighteen-year-old Miriam Angeline Works, whose family lived near the pail factory [where Brigham worked] and were said to be friends of Charles Parks [Brigham’s employer]. The second child of Asa and Abigail Works, born at Aurelius on June 6 (or June 7), 1806, Miriam (sometimes referred to as Angeline) was ‘a beautiful blonde with blue eyes and wavy hair; gentle and lovable’ [Susa Young Gates and Leah D. Widtsoe, *The Life Story of Brigham Young* (1930), 19]. Her father, like Brigham’s, was a Revolutionary War veteran. He had moved to western New York from Worcester, Massachusetts, not far from Hopkinton where John Young had lived. Brigham and Miriam became acquainted, he walked her home, they sang together and discussed life. At the age of twenty-three Brigham borrowed a horse and carriage from William Hayden’s father, rented a house up the road, and married Miriam.

“The marriage was performed on October 5 (some sources say October 8), 1824, by Gilbert Weed, Aurelius Justice of the Peace, at the tavern of James Pine between Auburn and Bucksville” (Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* [1985], 15).

Brigham Young was a devoted husband and father. In 1829 he moved his family to Mendon, New York, which was 15 miles from Joseph Smith’s home. There his second daughter was born and his wife contracted tuberculosis, which gradually weakened her. Loving, thoughtful, and tender—each day before work, Brigham saw to his wife’s comfort and his children’s care.

“Brigham Young once remarked that after marriage he worked for half a crown a day when he could not get more; got breakfast for his wife, himself, and the little girls, dressed the children, cleaned up the house, carried his wife to the rocking-chair by the fireplace and left her there until he could return in the evening. When he came home he cooked his own and the family’s supper, put his wife back to bed and finished up the day’s domestic labours” (Gates and Widtsoe, *The Life Story of Brigham Young*, 5).

On September 8, 1832, his wife, Miriam, died. She was buried in Mendon.

Brigham later married Mary Ann Angell. She had heard him preach and was very impressed. She also heard the gospel preached by Phineas and Lorenzo



Mary Ann Angell, wife of Brigham Young



The Phineas Young home, near Victor, New York

Young, Brigham's brothers, and was baptized by John P. Green, Brigham's brother-in-law. Later she moved to Kirtland, in the spring of 1833. Shortly after he arrived in Kirtland, Brigham heard her bear her testimony and he was impressed. They were married on February 18, 1834. He was 32 and she was 30.

## He Searched for Spiritual Fulfillment [2.5]

**President Brigham Young** once said: "Priests had urged me to pray before I was eight years old. On this subject I had but one prevailing feeling in my mind: Lord, preserve me until I am old enough to have sound judgment, and a discreet mind ripened upon a good solid foundation of common sense" ("Remarks," *Deseret News Weekly*, May 16, 1860, 82).

He was moral, hardworking, and honest. He said that from his mother he learned to love and reverence the Bible: "Of my mother—she that bore me—I can say, no better woman ever lived in the world than she was. . . . My mother, while she lived, taught her children all the time to honor the name of the Father and Son, and to reverence the Holy Book. She said, 'Read it, observe its precepts and apply them to your lives as far as you can. Do everything that is good; do nothing that is evil; and if you see any persons in distress, administer to their wants; never suffer anger to arise in your bosoms, for if you do, you may be overcome by evil'" (quoted in Preston Nibley, *Brigham Young: The Man and His Work* [1936], 2).

"Before I embraced the gospel, I understood pretty well what the different sects preached, but I was called an infidel because I could not embrace their dogmas. . . . There were some things they preached I could believe, and some I could not. . . . As far as their teachings were in accordance with the Bible, I could believe them, and no further" (Brigham Young, "Discourse," *Deseret News Weekly*, July 1, 1874, 340).

"I recollect when I was young going to hear Lorenzo Dow preach. He was esteemed a very great man by the religious folks. I, although young in years and lacking experience, had thought a great many times that I would like to hear some man who could tell me something, when he opened the Bible, about the son of God, the will of God, what the ancients did and received, saw and heard and knew pertaining to God and heaven. So I went to hear Lorenzo Dow. He stood up some of the time and he sat down some of the time; he was in this position and in that position, and talked two or three hours, and when he got through I asked myself, 'What have you learned from Lorenzo Dow?' and my answer was, 'nothing, nothing but morals.' He could tell the people they should not work on the Sabbath day; they should not lie, swear, steal, commit adultery, &c., but when he came to teaching the things of God he was as dark as midnight. . . . I would as lief go into a swamp at midnight to learn how to paint a picture and then define its colors when there is neither moon nor stars visible and profound darkness prevails, as to go to the religious world to learn about God, heaven, hell or the faith of a christian. But they can explain our duty as rational, moral beings, and that is good, excellent as far as it goes" (Brigham Young, "Discourse," *Deseret News Weekly*, June 21, 1871, 235).

## He Investigated the Claims of "Mormonism" with Caution [2.6]

While on a mission early in 1830, Samuel Smith sold a copy of the Book of Mormon to Phineas Young, Brigham Young's brother. Phineas later gave it to their father and their sister Fanny. Eventually, Brigham was given the book. He reviewed it with some caution, which was his nature. An honest, practical man, Brigham would not be railroaded into anything. He studied the book for two years and then received it with all his heart. Brigham and his wife, Miriam, joined the Church. He wanted to learn more, so he sought to become as informed about the Saints and the Prophet Joseph Smith as soon as he could.

**Brigham Young** was an honest man seeking for truth. His criteria for judging the Church were straightforward and sound. He said, "I watched to see whether good common sense was manifest, and if they had that, I wanted them to present it in accordance with the Scriptures" ("Remarks," *Deseret News Weekly*, May 16, 1860, 82). He said that when he received the Book of Mormon his feelings were:

"Wait a little while; what is the doctrine of the book, and of the revelations the Lord has given? Let me apply my heart to them, and after I had done this, I considered it to be my right to know for myself, as much as any man on earth.



Brigham Young and his brothers, by Charles R. Savage, September 13, 1866 (left to right: Lorenzo, Brigham, Phineas, Joseph, and John)

"I examined the matter studiously for two years, before I made up my mind to receive that book. I knew it was true, as well as I knew that I could see with my eyes, or feel by the touch of my fingers, or be sensible of the demonstration of any sense. Had not this been the case, I never would have embraced it to this day; it would have all been without form or comeliness to me. I wished time sufficient to prove all things for myself" ("A Discourse," *Deseret News Weekly*, Oct. 2, 1852, 96).

This was not procrastination, but the caution of a man who, after finding truth, would dedicate his life to it. He said, "I could not more honestly and earnestly have prepared myself to go into eternity, than I did to come into this church; and when I had ripened every thing in my mind I drank it in, and not till then" ("Remarks," *Deseret News Weekly*, May 16, 1860, 82).

## His Conversion Came by the Divine Witness of the Holy Ghost [2.7]

In 1852, **President Brigham Young** shared the following about his conversion: "If all the talent, tact, wisdom, and refinement of the world had been combined in one individual, and that person had been sent to me with the Book of Mormon, and had declared in the most exalted of earthly eloquence, the truth of it, undertaking to prove it by his learning and worldly wisdom, it would

have been to me like the smoke which arises only to vanish. But when I saw a man without eloquence, or talents for public speaking, who could only just say, 'I know by the power of the Holy Ghost that the Book of Mormon is true, that Joseph Smith is a prophet of the Lord.' The Holy Ghost proceeding from that individual illuminates my understanding, and light, glory, and immortality is before me; I am encircled by it, filled with it, and know for myself that the testimony of the man is true" ("A Discourse," *Deseret News Weekly*, Feb. 9, 1854, 24).

He wrote that after his baptism "we returned home, about two miles, the weather being cold and snowy; and before my clothes were dry on my back [Brother Eleazer Miller] laid his hands on me and ordained me an Elder, at which I marvelled. According to the words of the Savior, I felt a humble, child-like spirit, witnessing unto me that my sins were forgiven" (*Manuscript History, 1801–1844*, 3).



Cayuga Brook. On April 14, 1832, Eleazer Miller baptized Brigham Young in this little millstream near Mendon, New York.

## His Conversion Brought the Gifts of the Spirit [2.8]

Because of his great faith, **Brigham Young** enjoyed many of the gifts of the Spirit, such as revelation, prophecy, and speaking in tongues. He wrote: “A few weeks after my baptism I was at brother Kimball’s house one morning, and while family prayer was being offered up, brother Alpheus Gifford commenced speaking in tongues. Soon the Spirit came on me, and I spoke in tongues, and we thought only of the day of Pentecost, when the Apostles were clothed upon with cloven tongues of fire” (*Manuscript History, 1801–1844*, 3).

## The Spirit of the Lord Helped Him Preach and Teach [2.9]

One of President Young’s greatest challenges was public speaking, but so powerful was the effect of the Spirit upon him that he could not be still. **Brigham Young** made the following statements about his feelings:

“When I began to speak in public I was about as destitute of language as a man could well be. . . . How I have had the headache, when I had ideas to lay before the people and not words to express them; but I was so gritty that I always tried my best” (“Remarks,” *Deseret News Weekly*, Aug. 12, 1857, 180).



The Kirtland Temple in Ohio was both a blessing and a testing ground for Brigham Young. Much of the construction of the Kirtland Temple was supervised by Artemius Millett, a Canadian whose family was converted by Brigham Young.

“When I first commenced preaching, I made up my mind to declare the things that I understood, fearless of friends and threats, and regardless of caresses. They were nothing to me, for if it was my duty to rise before a congregation of strangers and say that the Lord lives, that he has revealed himself in this our day, that he has given to us a prophet and brought forth the new and everlasting covenant for the restoration of Israel, and if that was all I could say, I must be just as satisfied as though I could get up and talk for hours. . . . Had it not been for this feeling, nothing

could have induced me to have become a public speaker” (“Discourse,” *Deseret News Weekly*, Sept. 10, 1856, 211).

“One week [after baptism] I had the pleasure of meeting with and preaching to a large congregation. I think there were present on that occasion four experienced elders, formerly of the Methodist and Baptist persuasions, who had received the gospel and had been numbered with us. I expected to hear them address the people on the principles that we had just received through the servants of the Lord. They said that the Spirit of the Lord was not upon them to speak to the people, yet they had been preachers for years. I was but a child, so far as public speaking and a knowledge of the world was concerned; but the spirit of the Lord was upon me, and I felt as though my bones would consume within me unless I spoke to the people and told them what I had seen, heard and learned—what I had experienced and rejoiced in; and the first discourse I ever delivered I occupied over an hour. I opened my mouth and the Lord filled it” (“Discourse,” *Deseret News Weekly*, Aug. 3, 1870, 307).

## He Was a Member of Zion’s Camp [2.10]

In 1834, Brigham Young served in Zion’s Camp—a group of volunteers led by the Prophet Joseph Smith to go to Missouri and help the oppressed members there. The sacrifices they made and the hardships they endured during that march provided opportunities for men such as Brigham Young to show their devotion and dedication to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Brigham Young’s faith and loyalty to the Prophet Joseph Smith were also tested on the difficult 1,200-mile march of Zion’s Camp across four states. The majority of men later chosen to be in the leading councils of the Church served in Zion’s Camp.

## He Was a Dedicated Disciple of the Lord and of the Lord’s Prophet [2.11]

During 1836 the spirit of apostasy had filled a number of Saints at Kirtland, but **Brigham Young** demonstrated loyalty to the Prophet Joseph Smith which was characteristic of his entire ministry. He wrote:

“At this time the spirit of speculation, disaffection and apostasy imbibed by many of the Twelve, and which ran through all the Quorums of the Church, prevailed so extensively that it was difficult for any to see clearly the path to pursue.

“On a certain occasion several of the Twelve, the witnesses to the Book of Mormon, and others of the Authorities of the Church, held a council in the upper



Early Church leaders: Hyrum Smith, Willard Richards, Joseph Smith, Orson Pratt, Parley P. Pratt, Orson Hyde, Heber C. Kimball, and Brigham Young

room of the Temple. The question before them was to ascertain how the Prophet Joseph could be deposed, and David Whitmer appointed President of the Church. Father John Smith, brother Heber C. Kimball and others were present, who were opposed to such measures. I rose up, and in a plain and forcible manner told them that Joseph was a Prophet, and I knew it, and that they might rail and slander him as much as they pleased, they could not destroy the appointment of the Prophet of God, they could only destroy their own authority, cut the thread that bound them to the Prophet and to God and sink themselves to hell. Many were highly enraged at my decided opposition to their measures, and Jacob Bump (an old pugilist) was so exasperated that he could not be still. Some of the brethren near him put their hands on him, and requested him to be quiet; but he writhed and twisted his arms and body saying, 'How can I keep my hands off that man?' I told him if he thought it would give him any relief he might lay them on. This meeting was broken up without the apostates being able to unite on any decided measures of opposition. This was a crisis when earth and hell seemed leagued to overthrow the Prophet and Church of God. The knees of many of the strongest men in the Church faltered.

"During this siege of darkness I stood close by Joseph, and, with all the wisdom and power God bestowed upon me, put forth my utmost energies to sustain the servant of God and unite the Quorums of the Church" (*Manuscript History, 1801–1844*, 15–17).

## Discipleship Brought Persecution [2.12]

**Brigham Young** wrote: "On the morning of December 22nd [1837], I left Kirtland in consequence of the fury of the mob and the spirit that prevailed in the apostates, who had threatened to destroy me because I would proclaim, publicly and privately, that I knew, by the power of the Holy Ghost, that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of the Most High God, and had not transgressed and fallen as the apostates declared" (*Manuscript History, 1801–1844*, 23).

The cost of discipleship is often high, but so are the rewards. Consider the following statement of **President Brigham Young**, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"[On December 10, 1843] I attended prayer-meeting in the Assembly Room. President Joseph Smith being absent, I presided and instructed the brethren upon the necessity of following our file leader, and our Savior,

in all his laws and commandments, without asking any questions why they were so" (*Manuscript History, 1801–1844*, 156).

## Joseph Smith Was a Prophet Who Should Be Followed, Not Condemned [2.13]

Speaking about the importance of having faith and confidence in our Church leaders, **President Brigham Young** said:

"Though I admitted in my feelings and knew all the time that Joseph was a human being and subject to err, still it was none of my business to look after his faults.

"I repented of my unbelief, and that too very suddenly; I repented about as quickly as I committed the error. It was not for me to question whether Joseph was dictated by the Lord at all times and under all circumstances, or not. I never had the feeling, for one moment, to believe that any man or set of men or beings upon the face of the whole earth had anything to do with him, for he was superior to them all and held the keys of salvation over them. Had I not thoroughly understood this and believed it, I much doubt whether I should ever have embraced what is called 'Mormonism.' . . .

"It was not my prerogative to call him in question with regard to any act of his life. He was God's servant, and not mine. He did not belong to the people but to the Lord, and was doing the work of the Lord. . . . That was my faith, and it is my faith still.

"If we have any lack of confidence in those whom the Lord has appointed to lead the people, how can we have confidence in a being whom we know nothing about? . . .



Chair Brigham Young made for his father and Brigham's missionary bag

"How are we going to obtain implicit confidence in all the words and doings of Joseph? By one principle alone, that is, to live so that the voice of the Spirit will testify to us all the time that he is the servant of the Most High; so that we can realize as it were the Lord's declaring that 'Joseph is my servant, I lead him day by day whithersoever I will, and dictate him to do whatever I will; he is my mouth to the people.' . . . ' . . . That is the preaching which you hear all the

time, viz.: to live so that the voice of God's Spirit will always be with you, and then you know that what you hear from the heads of the people is right" ("Sermon," *Deseret News Weekly*, Apr. 8, 1857, 36).

## Applying the Prophet's Words Became the Key to His Success [2.14]

The Prophet Joseph Smith recognized early the greatness of Brigham Young, and over the course of the years the hearts of these two giants of the Restoration were knit together. Brigham Young listened to the Prophet preach and teach, not only in session with others but also privately. The future President of the Church was taught the mysteries of godliness, was given keys and powers of administration and was trusted with sacred teachings shared initially by few others. He knew how to receive the mind and will of the Lord, was taught truth upon truth, and received revelation upon revelation and ordinance upon ordinance until all was given that was necessary for him to preside among the brethren and eventually over the Church.

In 1868, **President Brigham Young** said: "In my experience I never did let an opportunity pass of getting with the Prophet Joseph and of hearing him speak in public or in private, so that I might draw understanding from the fountain from which he spoke, that I might have it and bring it forth when it was needed. My own experience tells me that the great success with which the Lord has crowned my labors is owing to the fact of applying my heart to wisdom. . . . In the days of the Prophet Joseph, such moments were more precious to me than all the wealth of the world. No matter how great my poverty—if I had to borrow meal to feed my wife and children, I never let an opportunity pass of learning what the Prophet had to impart. This is the secret of the success of your humble servant" ("Remarks," *Deseret News Weekly*, Sept. 16, 1868, 250).

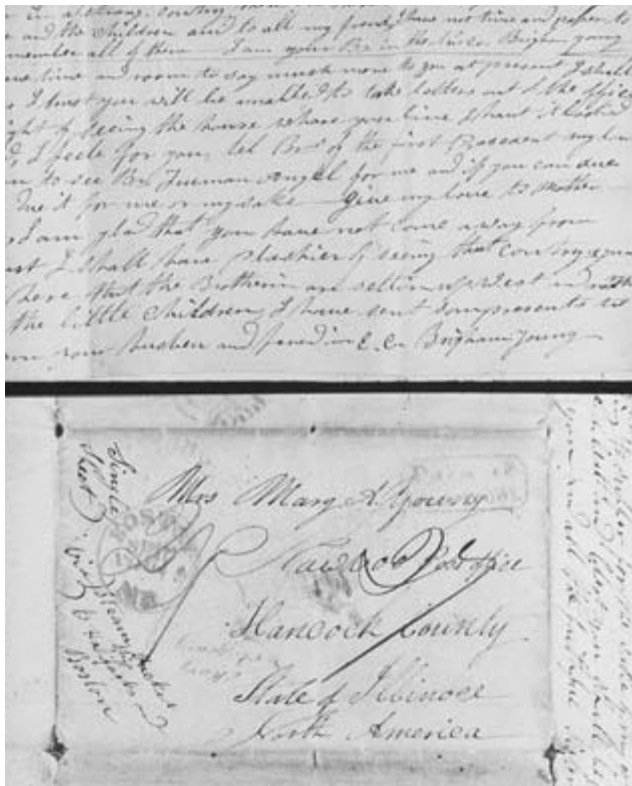
## He Helped Lead the Saints out of Missouri and into Illinois [2.15]

Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball led the Saints out of the hostile influences of the Missourians into Commerce, Illinois. Many of the circumstances associated with the Missouri exodus were again encountered on February 4, 1846, when the Saints left Nauvoo, Illinois. Much like the Prophet Joseph Smith, Brigham Young was tutored by the Lord to enable him to be a powerful influence for good in strengthening the kingdom of God on earth.

## He Was a Faithful Missionary [2.16]

Brigham Young served 10 missions between the time of his conversion and the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith. In September 1839, **Brigham Young**, so sick he could not walk far without help, left his family to serve a two-year mission in England. While traveling on a steamboat on Lake Erie from Fairport, Ohio, to Buffalo, New York, a storm arose and hindered the progress of the ship. He recorded: “The wind rose about one o’clock in the morning. I went upon deck and felt impressed in spirit to pray to the Father, in the name of Jesus, for a forgiveness of my sins, and then I felt to command the winds to cease, and let us go safe on our journey. The winds abated, and I felt to give the glory and honor and praise to that God who rules all things” (*Manuscript History*, 1801–1844, 58–59).

Always for him, his greatest joy was being at home with his family. In July 1841 he was reunited at last with his wife, Mary Ann, and children at Nauvoo after his long mission to England. On January 18, 1842, **Brigham Young** tenderly confided in his journal: “This evening I am with my wife alone by my fireside for the first time for years. We enjoy it and feel to praise the Lord” (Brigham Young’s journal 1837–45; spelling standardized).



While laboring in England, Brigham Young wrote his beloved Mary Ann as often as he could.



The eight Apostles who served in England from 1840–41

## He Prepared for Leadership [2.17]

Strong, intelligent, and resourceful, Brigham Young was given leadership responsibilities early. He was a captain in Zion’s Camp, a confidant of the Prophet Joseph Smith, one of the first Apostles to be called in this dispensation, organizer of the Missouri exodus, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and presiding elder of the English Mission. Devoted and trusted, his loyalty to the Prophet was constant. Hardship and trials were schoolmasters that mellowed him into the controlled, compassionate prophet he became.

During the dark days of Kirtland, when apostasy ran rampant even among the Church leadership, it was Brigham Young’s unyielding firmness that became a strength to the loyal Saints. His powerful leadership led the Church during the Missouri persecutions while the Prophet Joseph and Hyrum Smith were languishing in the Liberty Jail. He led the Twelve Apostles about 200 miles into hostile Missouri so that they could leave for their mission to England from the place where the Lord’s servant said they should.

In England the Twelve Apostles struggled under continual pressure from men, nature, and Satan himself. Through it all, Brigham Young demonstrated his great leadership abilities and dedication to the restored gospel. He assisted Wilford Woodruff and Willard Richards in the mass conversions in Herefordshire, preached in London, spoke in tongues, healed the sick and lame, compiled a book of hymns, published the Book of Mormon and indexed it, established on a firm foundation the first mission across the seas, and organized a system of transporting thousands of converts to America, all the while helping the Quorum of the Twelve grow into a unified, smooth-working body.



Brigham Young's home in Nauvoo was restored and refurbished by architects and specialists of the Nauvoo restoration.

Later in Nauvoo, under the direction of the First Presidency, he presided over meetings and councils. There was no self-seeking, vainglory, or self-aggrandizement in the man. He was dedicated to supporting with all his heart the Prophet he loved.

## The Mantle of the Prophet Rested on Him [2.18]

After the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith, several men stepped forward as would-be leaders of the Church. Some members were confused as to whom to follow. But at a critical meeting held on August 8, 1844, the power of God was upon **President Brigham Young**, the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He recorded in his journal: "I arose and spoke to the people. My heart was swollen with compassion towards them and by the power

of the Holy Ghost, even the spirit of the prophets. I was enabled to comfort the hearts of the Saints" (Brigham Young's journal 1837–45, Aug. 8, 1844; spelling and punctuation standardized).

On that occasion, a vision was opened to many. Representative of the many testimonies of those who were there is that of **Elder George Q. Cannon**, who was 15 years old then and who later became an Apostle and a counselor in the First Presidency: "It was the voice of Joseph himself; and not only was it the voice of Joseph which was heard; but it seemed in the eyes of the people as though it was the very person of Joseph which stood before them. A more wonderful and miraculous event than was wrought that day in the presence of that congregation we never heard of. The Lord gave His people a testimony that left no room for doubt as to who was the man He had chosen to lead them. They both saw and heard with their natural eyes and ears, and then the words which were uttered came, accompanied by the convincing power of God, to their hearts, and they were filled with the Spirit and with great joy" ("Joseph Smith, the Prophet," *Juvenile Instructor*, Oct. 29, 1870, 174–75).

**President Wilford Woodruff**, who was also a witness to the event, said: "If I had not seen him with my own eyes, there is no one that could have convinced me that it was not Joseph Smith speaking. It was as the voice and face of Joseph Smith; and anyone can testify to this who was acquainted with these two men" (quoted in J. M. Whitaker, "Priesthood and the Right of Succession," *Deseret Evening News*, Mar. 12, 1892).

Brother Benjamin F. Johnson wrote of his experience: "President Rigdon was called upon to put forth his claim before the people, which he did, and after his closing remarks, which were void of all power or influence, President Brigham Young arose and spoke. I saw him arise, but as soon as he spoke I jumped upon my feet, for in every possible degree it was Joseph's voice, and his person, in look, attitude, dress and appearance was Joseph himself, personified; and I knew in a moment the spirit and mantle of Joseph was upon him" (*My Life's Review* [n.d.], 104).



Brigham Young, about 1853–54

## His Courage, Faith, and Sense of Humor Were Examples for the Saints [2.19]

After the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith, President Brigham Young became the target of harassing lawsuits and arrests. He met the challenges with restraint and humor.



The Nauvoo Temple

stay in the cold waiting for me" (in *History of the Church*, 7:535).

On another occasion **President Brigham Young** was informed that federal officers were waiting at the door of the temple so that they might arrest him. He had his coachman bring his carriage around to the front of the temple. William Miller then put on Brigham's cap and Heber C. Kimball's cloak, left the temple, and acted as though he were going to get into the carriage. The law officers ran up and arrested him. He protested loudly that they had the wrong man and that he was not guilty of the charges they brought against him. Believing they had Brigham Young, they carted him off to Carthage; all the while he continued to protest and claim his innocence.

Once they arrived in Carthage word soon spread that the marshal had brought in Brigham Young. There was great excitement until one man recognized William Miller. He called the marshal out, and after the marshal returned he asked Miller if his name was Young.

"He answered, 'I never told you my name was Young, did I?' 'No,' replied the marshal, 'but one of my men professed to be

In November 1845, **President Brigham Young** wrote that while he and some of the other brethren were in the Nauvoo Temple, "Hans C. Hanson, the doorkeeper reported that there were two officers waiting at the foot of the stairs for me. I told the brethren that I could bear to tarry here where it was warm as long as they could



Brigham Young, about 1846; copy of a daguerreotype by Lucian R. Foster

acquainted with Mr. Young, and pointed you out to me to be him.' William Backenstos was called in and he told them William Miller was not Brigham Young. Another man came, and said he could swear Miller was not Brigham Young. The marshal said he was sorry, and asked Miller his name, he replied, 'it is William Miller.'

"The marshal left the room and soon returned accompanied by Edmonds [a lawyer] who was laughing heartily at him. Edmonds inquired if he had anything more to do with 'Mr. Young'. The marshal replied that he did not know that he had anything further to do with Mr. Miller" (Brigham Young, in *History of the Church*, 7:550–51).

## The Mormon Battalion Was Organized [2.20]

In 1845 the United States annexed Texas. This was considered an act of war by Mexico, which claimed most of the Texas territory. James K. Polk, president of the United States, favored expansionist views and felt that the acquisition of the Texas territory, along with the later acquisition of New Mexico and upper California, was important for the development of the country. The Congress of the United States declared war with Mexico on May 12, 1846. Soon after the declaration of war, the United States Army was charged with conquering all of this western territory.



Brigham Young recruiting for the Mormon Battalion

Polk did not want the migrating Latter-day Saints to align themselves with the British in the Oregon territory or to play any antagonistic role in the expansion of the United States. The government, therefore, determined that the Saints should be invited to raise 500 volunteers to serve in the war with Mexico. This would help keep the Saints aligned with the United States. The feelings of the Saints were not as negative as the U.S. government had assumed, however. President Brigham Young recognized that this situation provided an opportunity to show loyalty to the United States and to earn desperately needed capital for the exodus. It also provided a rationale for establishing temporary settlements. President Young spoke to the Saints and tried to clear their minds of prejudice against the federal government and told them that this was the first offer they had received from



Brigham Young, about 1851–52

the government that could benefit them. Soon many Latter-day Saints recognized the opportunity and volunteered for the battalion.

Under the direction of Captain James Allen of the United States Army, around 500 soldiers and nearly 80 women and children began their march to Fort Leavenworth on July 21, 1846. After many trials, the group reached Mission San Diego, in California, on January 29, 1847. They had marched 2,030 miles. After arriving in California, the battalion served as occupation troops with garrison duty in the San Diego and Los Angeles areas.

When members of the battalion were outfitted, they each received supplies that included a gun and \$42.00 for clothing for the year. Part of each volunteer's pay and clothing allowance was collected by Parley P. Pratt and given to the battalion's families in Iowa and to other Church members being evacuated from Nauvoo. After they were discharged in California, many battalion members continued to send money they earned from other jobs to their families.

## He Saw the Salt Lake Valley in a Vision [2.21]

In 1869, **President George A. Smith**, who was a counselor to President Brigham Young, spoke of how the Saints came to settle in the Salt Lake Valley: "The question is frequently asked, 'How did you ever find this place?' I answer we were led to it by the inspiration of God. After the death of Joseph Smith, when it seemed as if every trouble and calamity had come upon the Saints, Brigham Young who was President of the Twelve, then the presiding Quorum of the Church, sought the Lord to know what they should do and where they should lead the people for safety, and while they were fasting and praying daily on this subject President Young had a vision of Joseph Smith, who shewed him the mountain that we now call Ensign Peak, immediately north of Salt Lake City, and there was an ensign fell upon that peak, and Joseph said 'Build under the point where the colors fall and you will prosper and have peace.' The Pioneers had no pilot or guide, none among them had ever been in the country or knew anything about it. However they traveled under the direction of President Young until they reached this valley" ("Historical Discourse," *Deseret News Weekly*, June 30, 1869, 248).

## The First Pioneer Company Was Organized [2.22]

In January 1847, President Brigham Young had a dream in which he discussed with the Prophet Joseph Smith the best way to help the Saints cross the plains (see Bruce A. VanOrden, "Revelation Clarifies Role of Twelve," *Church News*, Jan. 11, 1997, 7). Three days later he presented to the Church the "Word and Will of the Lord concerning the Camp of Israel in their journeyings to the West" (D&C 136:1). It was decided that a pioneer company consisting of 144 handpicked men would travel to the Great Salt Lake Basin. This group would include mechanics, teamsters, hunters, frontiersmen, carpenters, sailors, soldiers, accountants, bricklayers, blacksmiths, wagon makers, and so forth. The actual company consisted of 143 men, 3 women, and 2 children. This group was prepared to blaze a trail that the other Saints would follow to the West. Eight men of this company were Apostles and several had served in Zion's Camp. Some of the company started from Winter Quarters on April 5, 1847, but a majority of the group started on April 16, 1847.

This pioneer company traversed 1,100 miles from Winter Quarters, near present day Omaha, Nebraska, to the Salt Lake Valley. Wherever possible, they followed existing roads and trails. Their route followed the broad and gentle Platte River Valley for 600 miles to Fort Laramie in Wyoming. From there they crossed to the south side of the Platte and followed the Oregon Trail for almost 400 miles to Fort Bridger; then they continued south on the Reid-Donner Trail into the Salt Lake Valley. During the final phase of the trek, which was the roughest section of the trip, President Young contracted mountain fever and the company split into three groups: the vanguard, the main company, and the rear guard, which included President Young.

"The advance company of pioneers entered the Salt Lake Valley on July 22, 1847, and immediately set up a crude irrigation system to flood the land and prepare for planting. On July 24, Brigham Young and the rear company arrived at the mouth of Emigration Canyon. Wilford Woodruff drove President Young in his carriage. They looked to the future as they gazed over the valley. Wilford Woodruff wrote, 'Thoughts of pleasing meditations ran in rapid succession through our minds while we contemplated that not many years the house of GOD would stand upon the top of the mountains while the valleys would be converted into orchard, vineyard, gardens and fields by the inhabitants of Zion and the standard be unfurled for the nations to gather there to.' Brigham Young said he was satisfied with the appearance of the valley as a 'resting place for the Saints and was amply repaid for his journey' [Wilford Woodruff journals, July 24, 1847; spelling and capitalization standardized].

"On a later occasion, Wilford Woodruff explained that when they came out of the canyon he turned the carriage



**Monument at Winter Quarters, dedicated to the Saints buried in the Mormon Pioneers Cemetery. The summer, fall, and winter of 1846–47 were difficult for the Saints living in settlements across Iowa. Poor living conditions, lack of food, and a hard winter took its toll on Church members. It was at Winter Quarters that Brigham Young received the revelation on how to organize the Saints for the trek west (see D&C 136).**

so that President Young could see the whole valley. 'While gazing upon the scene before us, he was enwrapped in vision for several minutes. He had seen the valley before in vision, and upon this occasion he saw the future glory of Zion and of Israel, as they would be, planted in the valleys of these mountains. When the vision had passed, he said, "It is enough. This is the right place. Drive on"' [in "Pioneers' Day," *Deseret Evening News*, July 26, 1880, 2].

". . . By July 28, Brigham Young's decision about the location of a city was firm. Between two forks of City Creek, he designated the lot where the temple would stand. The city would be laid out evenly and perfectly square from that point" (*Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 2nd ed. [2003], 333). President Young named the region "Deseret," which, in the Book of Mormon, is a honey bee (see Ether 2:3).

## He Was a Great Leader and Colonizer [2.23]

With authority from God, President Brigham Young led the Saints west, directed the exploration and settlement of vast areas, founded towns and cities, and made peace with the Indians. He started schools and established roadways, transportation systems, telegraph lines, irrigation, farming, industries, and mercantile institutions. He directed the ever-expanding missionary program and presided as the first territorial governor of Utah. Throughout his life he worked with such confidence that many remarked with awe that "Brother Brigham" seemed to know exactly what he was doing from the start. And he did! This master craftsman and builder had been given the perfect blueprints from which to work—nothing less than the heavenly order of the kingdom of God.

It was not his executive ability alone that endeared him to his family and the Saints. He was an exemplary father, always demonstrating kindness and concern. Working alongside the Saints and his family, he chopped wood, cut timber, made bridges, cleared land, and built roads. During the exodus he was the first up in the morning and the last to retire at night, always making the rounds to see that all were as comfortable as possible. But above all, he was a prophet of God. He could rebuke, yet love and inspire, demand and give, lead and follow. The courage and humor with which he faced trials served as an anchor and a model for the persecuted and weary Saints.



The route from Nauvoo to the Salt Lake Valley

## The First Presidency Was Reorganized [2.24]

For over three years after the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Church was led by the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. After much discussion and prayer, it was finally moved and approved that Brigham Young be sustained as President of the Church and that he nominate two counselors to serve with him in the First Presidency. On December 7, 1847, during general conference at Kanesville, Iowa, Brigham Young was readily sustained as the second President of the Church, with Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards as his counselors.



The First Presidency: Heber C. Kimball, Brigham Young, and Willard Richards

## He Began the Building of the Salt Lake Temple [2.25]

**President Brigham Young** had identified the site of the Salt Lake Temple in 1847, shortly after arriving in the valley. Under his direction, the cornerstones of the Salt Lake Temple were laid on April 6, 1853. That same day, during general conference, he said: "Five years ago last July I was here, and saw in the spirit the Temple not ten feet from where we have laid the Chief Corner Stone. I have not inquired what kind of a Temple we should build. Why? Because it was represented before me. I never looked upon that ground, but the vision of it was there. I see it as plainly as if it was in reality before me" ("Minutes of the General Conference," *Deseret News Weekly*, Apr. 30, 1853, 46).

Construction on the temple was delayed during the time Johnston's Army was approaching the Salt Lake Valley, and only limited construction could be performed during the many years the Church was experiencing substantial persecution for its practice of plural marriage. President Young insisted that only the best materials and craftsmanship be used in the temple's construction, and he sensed that he would not live long enough to dedicate it. Exactly 40 years from the day the cornerstones were laid, President Wilford Woodruff, the fourth President of the Church, had that responsibility.



On July 28, 1847, Brigham Young and some other Church leaders walked northward out of their camp to a spot President Young had seen in vision four days earlier. He pushed his cane into the ground and declared, “Here we will build the temple of our God.” (Photograph taken around 1870–73 by an unknown photographer.)



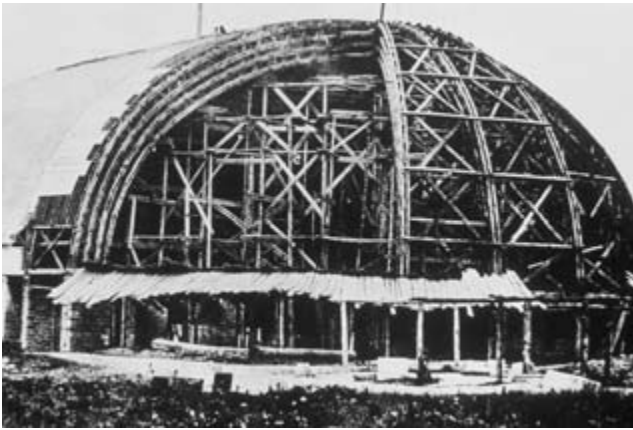
Photograph showing the partly completed Salt Lake Temple

President Woodruff directed the laying of the capstone of the Salt Lake Temple in April 1892. On that occasion 50,000 Latter-day Saints filled Temple Square and the adjoining streets. On April 6, 1893, with the work completed on the inside of the temple, the dedicatory ceremonies commenced. “President Woodruff saw in the events of the day the fulfillment of a prophetic dream.

He told the Saints that many years before in a [dream] Brigham Young had given him the keys of the temple and told him to dedicate it to the Lord. In his opening remarks President Woodruff prophesied that from that time the power of Satan would be broken and his power over the Saints diminished, and there would be an increased interest in the gospel message. [See Matthias F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff* (1964), 582–83.]” (*Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 445). Truly, the “mountain of the Lord’s house” was firmly established in the tops of the mountains (see Isaiah 2:2).

## The Salt Lake Tabernacle Was Built [2.26]

President Brigham Young believed that a large structure was needed that could hold a significant number of the Saints at one time. A pattern for a large, dome-shaped house of worship was vivid in his mind. President Young called into his office Henry Grow, who was a master mechanic and an experienced millwright. President Young had recently seen him complete a wooden arch bridge, with no center



Building the Salt Lake Tabernacle, about 1867

supports, over the Jordan River. With the assistance of the Church architect, William H. Folsom, the construction of the Tabernacle began during the spring of 1863.

The Tabernacle would become one of the largest buildings of its kind in the world, measuring 150 feet wide, 250 feet long, and 80 feet high on the outside. By the fall of 1867, the Tabernacle and its organ was completed enough to be used at the October conference. By 1870, the organ and many of the inside fixtures were finished. The gallery was started in 1870. President John Taylor, who was President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, dedicated the completed Tabernacle at the October conference in 1875.

## He Showed a Blend of the Practical and the Spiritual [2.27]

President Brigham Young's practicality is most often stressed, but that practicality was grounded firmly in the spiritual roots of the Restoration, of the kingdom of God, of Zion, and of celestial glory. He said of his younger days: "I wanted to thunder, and roar out the gospel to the nations. It burned in my bones like fire pent up. . . .

" . . . Nothing would satisfy me but to cry abroad in the world what the Lord is doing in the latter days" ("Discourse," *Deseret News Weekly*, Aug. 24, 1854, 83).

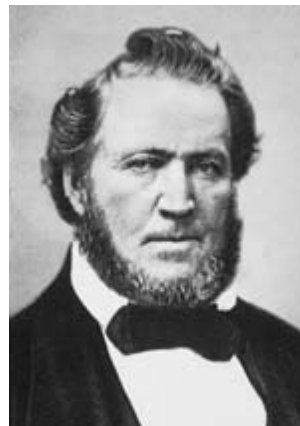
As the prophet, seer, and revelator, his desire continued to burn with perhaps even more intensity. He was determined to do everything possible to bring to fruition all that the Lord wanted done in the last days. He said:

"The Joseph Smith has laid the foundation of the kingdom of God in the last days; others will rear the superstructure. . . .

" . . . I know that he was called of God, and this I know by the revelations of Jesus Christ to me, and by the testimony of the Holy Ghost. Had I not so learned this truth, I should never have been what is called a 'Mormon,' neither should I have been here to-day" ("Remarks," *Deseret News Weekly*, Oct. 22, 1862, 129).

President Young insisted on continuing the expenditure of time and money to complete the Nauvoo Temple. Some of the Saints thought this impractical since it was apparent that the Saints would not be able to enjoy the temple for very long. But President Young knew that from that temple, even though it would be used only briefly, would come the power necessary for the Saints to make the sacrifices and endure the hardships required during the exodus. By completing the temple, he demonstrated a balance and blend of the practical, the spiritual, and the perspective of the eternal.

"There were those, of course, who criticized Brigham Young's intimate involvement with secular and temporal pursuits—his concern with fencing farms, with negotiating contracts for selling grain, his mobilizing workers to build the transcontinental railroad—but his point of view was



Brigham Young, about 1870



Statue of Brigham Young in the United States Capital Building, Washington, D.C.

that temporal and spiritual concerns were indissoluble. In wearing many different hats—prophet, businessman, governor, and family patriarch—he saw his task and goal to be to promote the temporal *and* spiritual welfare of his people. In his view, he was the Lord's steward in using all human resources—public and private, church and state—to create an economic and social order

where all God's children under his care might live in peace and prosperity. . . .

"Contemporary observers whom we have a right to respect—persons of education and experience and standing who traveled to Utah to observe him—emphasized three characteristics: his self-confidence, his sincerity, and his good common sense. Fitz Hugh Ludlow, a nationally known writer and artistic critic, found that Brigham Young had 'absolute certainty of himself and his own opinions' [*The Heart of a Continent* (1870), 368]. Governor Young, he wrote, was convinced that he was doing God's work, and that if he and other mortals did all they could to establish the kingdom, God would see to the rest. This helps us to understand the governor's firmness, his calmness, and his unshakeable optimism in the face of seemingly impossible circumstances" (Leonard J. Arrington and Ronald K. Esplin, "Building a Commonwealth: The Secular Leadership of Brigham Young," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, summer 1977, 219–20).

## As a Colonizer, He Has No Peer in American History [2.28]

"While the Mormon outposts were being established, numerous towns were springing up on favorable sites on the canyon streams adjacent to Salt Lake Valley. Gradually one valley after another received its portion of colonists, the growth being mainly southward during the first period, as the climate in that direction was thought



The Beehive House, in Salt Lake City, was first occupied by Brigham and Mary Ann Angell Young in 1854. President Young lived there the remaining 23 years of his life.



The proposed state of Deseret

to be more favorable for agriculture than that northward. . . . During the first ten years in the Basin, 100 towns were established. The settlements clustered mainly east and south of the Great Salt Lake, of the Jordan River, and of Utah Lake, with a line of communities running in a southwest direction from Juab County [in the middle west of the state] to the southwest corner of Utah. Besides these main groups of colonies, a number of Mormons were living in Sanpete County [in the middle of the state] and in [other] outposts. . . .

"Thus within ten years after the Saints had arrived in the Great West, they had opened colonization activities in a frontier country extending 1,000 miles from north to south and 800 miles from east to west. Brigham Young's plan of preempting the West was being realized. . . .

"During the thirty years of his residence in the Basin, the Mormon leader, Brigham Young, successfully founded and witnessed the development of communities in almost every valley of the present state of Utah, as well as many in southern Idaho, Arizona, and Nevada. Most of the towns built by the Mormons were within a rectangular district 500 miles long by 400 miles wide, omitting the Arizona settlements. However, some were as distant as 1,000 miles east of Salt Lake City in Iowa and Nebraska; San Bernardino[, California,] was about 750 miles southwest of the parent colony, while Fort Lemhi was located in northern Idaho. The total Mormon population at the time of Brigham's death (1877) was approximately 140,000" (Milton R. Hunter, *Brigham Young, the Colonizer* [1940], 354–55, 357).

## The Perpetual Emigrating Fund Was Established [2.29]

The Perpetual Emigrating Fund was established in 1849 to assist those Saints who needed financial help as they gathered to the West from many places throughout the world. In an 1853 general epistle to the Church, the First Presidency stated: “With the blessings of Providence, most, or all of these funds will be brought forth to the assistance of the emigration of the poor, one year hence. Therefore let not the Saints stay their hands, but let books be opened, and donations be received by the Presidents of all the various missions of the Latter-day Saints upon the whole earth, to help the Perpetual Emigrating Fund, and the Saints to come home. And let all who can, come without delay, and not wait to be helped by these funds, but leave them to help those who cannot help themselves” (in James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. [1965–75], 2:116).



Of Brigham Young's 57 children, 17 sons and 29 daughters grew to maturity. The 10 oldest daughters were near the same age. They have rather stern countenances because it was not customary to smile for photographs then.

## The Saints Colonized Many Western Communities [2.30]

“[Brigham Young] sent out exploring parties to select favorable sites for the new colonies and often chose the sites himself. He sent balanced groups of industrial and agricultural workers to found these new communities. Brigham personally supervised the laying out of many of the towns into surveyed square blocks with wide streets and the allotting of farming lands and city lots to the Saints.

“While he was founding colonies he also provided his followers with civil government, with social institutions for their education and enjoyment, and with the necessary equipment for their economic independence and prosperity. On March 12, 1849, he was elected the Provisional Governor of the ‘State of Deseret’. The following year, September 28, 1850, Utah was made a territory with Brigham as the governor. This position he held until 1858, when he was replaced by

Alfred Cumming. While acting as governor, as well as throughout his entire career in Utah as President of the Mormon Church, Brigham Young deserves much credit for the success of federal Indian agents, federal surveys across the Basin, the building of the transcontinental railway, and the construction of the telegraph.

“All of the Mormon colonization accomplishments were made possible partially by adding thousands of colonists to his ranks which he did by sending missionaries to various parts of the United States as well as to Europe, Canada, Hispanic America, India, Australia, and the Islands of the Pacific. He was able to fuse this heterogeneous mass of humanity, representing several different races, into a harmonious social unit” (Hunter, *Brigham Young, the Colonizer*, 358–59).



Brigham Young, about 1864

## He Supported Education and the Cultural Arts [2.31]

“While building homes, developing farms and establishing themselves a government, the Mormon colonists did not neglect the finer side of life. Education, religion, art, drama, and music were fostered for the social development of the people. The Saints built their own theaters and trained their children in the various sciences and in music. Simultaneously with the erection of private dwellings, each group of colonists through cooperative effort constructed a public hall which was used as a church house, a school house, and a place in which dances and dramas were conducted. In October, 1847,



Interior of the Salt Lake Theatre, about 1900

the first pioneer group opened a school in an old military tent. Even while these frontiersmen were struggling to construct their first shelters in the Salt Lake Valley, this school was conducted daily. Only two years elapsed before Governor Young signed an act, passed by the first legislative Assembly of the State of Deseret, incorporating a university, later known as the University of Utah.

"As early as 1850 the Salt Lake Musical and Dramatic Association was formed, conducting its earlier performances in the Temple Square Bowery. Later, 1852, the Social Hall was built. It was one of the first theaters erected west of the Missouri River. Ten years later the Salt Lake Theatre replaced the Social Hall" (Hunter, *Brigham Young, the Colonizer*, 359–60).

One of Brigham Young's daughters wrote: "Father realized that this people, being almost completely shut off from contacts with the outside world, must themselves provide the means for their cultural uplift and entertainment. He must have felt that arduous task was fully justified, for years after the [Salt Lake] theatre was built he said, 'If I were placed on a cannibal island and given a task of civilizing its people, I should straightway build a theatre for the purpose'" (Clarissa Young Spencer with Mabel Harmer, *Brigham Young at Home* [1940], 147).

## His Humor and Love Were Appreciated [2.32]

President Brigham Young's sense of humor endeared him to his followers and showed that he did not take himself too seriously. When his sons were caught donating some props (without permission) for a play written by their friends, President Young said to the theater manager, "These boys have a play. They call it 'The Robbers of the Rocky Mountains.' I don't know

much about the mountains, but they certainly made a clean job of my old barn. Give them a date at the Theatre" (quoted in Spencer and Harmer, *Brigham Young at Home*, 160).

The quality for which the Latter-day Saints most honored and revered President Young was the love that showed in his concern for each one of them, even from the early days of his leadership. On the plains, at a stopping place named Hickory Grove, he was out in the rain all day arranging wagons, helping to pitch tents, chopping wood, and in every way seeing that all were comfortable. Later, in Utah, he insisted in meeting every wagon train or handcart company he could, and he would not leave until every soul had a place to stay and a job assignment by which he or she could be secure.

President Brigham Young led the Church for 33 years. He knew the divinity and destiny of the work. He brought the Church west and helped establish a base from which the kingdom of God might continue to go forth and fill the earth.



President Brigham Young, about 1876



# John Taylor

## Third President of the Church

3

### Highlights in the Life of John Taylor

Age	Events
	He was born November 1, 1808, in Milnthorpe, Westmoreland, England, to James and Agnes Taylor.
23	He immigrated to Toronto, Canada (1832).
24	He married Leonora Cannon (Jan. 28, 1833).
27	He was baptized into the Church by Parley P. Pratt (May 9, 1836); he was later called to preside over the Church in the eastern part of Canada (1836).
30	He was ordained an Apostle by Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball (Dec. 19, 1838).
31–32	He served his first mission to the British Isles (Dec. 1839–Apr. 1841).
33–37	He was editor of the newspapers <i>Times and Seasons</i> and <i>Nauvoo Neighbor</i> (Feb. 1842–spring, 1846).
35	He was wounded by a mob in Carthage Jail (June 27, 1844).
37–38	He served a second mission to Great Britain (1846–47).
40–43	He served a mission to France and Germany (Oct. 1849–Aug. 1852).
42–43	He wrote <i>The Government of God</i> (1851–52).
46–48	He published the newspaper <i>The Mormon</i> in New York City (Feb. 1855–Sept. 1857).
49–68	He served as a member of the Utah Territorial Legislature (1857–76).
63	The Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act was passed, restricting the Church’s rights to own property (June 3, 1862).
68	He led the Church as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles after Brigham Young’s death (Aug. 29, 1877).
71	He became President of the Church (Oct. 10, 1880); the Pearl of Great Price was accepted as scripture (Oct. 10, 1880).
73	He published <i>An Examination into and an Elucidation of the Great Principle of the Mediation and Atonement of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ</i> (1882); the U.S. Congress passed the Edmunds Act, which declared plural marriage illegal (Feb. 16, 1882).
75	He dedicated the Logan Temple (May 17, 1884).
76	He delivered his last public sermon; he then withdrew into exile because of persecutions for plural marriage (Feb. 1, 1885).
78	The Edmunds-Tucker Act, which disincorporated the Church, became law (Feb. 17, 1887); he died in Kaysville, Utah (July 25, 1887).

## His Early Years Showed His Deeply Religious Nature [3.1]

John Taylor was the first, and only, President of the Church who was not born in the United States. He was born in Milnthorpe, Westmoreland, England, in 1808 to James and Agnes Taylor; his mother's maiden name was also Taylor. John was one of ten children; he had seven brothers and two sisters. Three of his brothers died in infancy, and his oldest brother died at age 22. Although they were not wealthy, the Taylor family was close-knit and religious, and the children were taught the value of hard work. John labored on a farm on the family estate, and later he mastered the wood turner's trade.

His parents were members of the Church of England but, although he was baptized as an infant, John Taylor cared little for the creeds of his parent's faith. As a youth he was instructed through dreams and visions.



The Taylor estate, Milnthorpe, Westmoreland, England

"'Often when alone,' he wrote, 'and sometimes in company, I heard sweet, soft, melodious music, as if performed by angelic or supernatural beings.' When but a small boy he saw, in vision, an angel in the heavens, holding a trumpet to his mouth, sounding a message to the nations. The import of this vision he did not understand until later in life" (B. H. Roberts, *The Life of John Taylor* [1963], 27–28).

John Taylor's family moved frequently during his childhood. At age 14 he was apprenticed to a barrel maker. John then left home to learn the art of working with a wood lathe. He pursued and mastered that occupation from his 15th to his 20th year.

While in his mid-teens, John Taylor joined the Methodist Church and actively labored to involve his friends in



Photo courtesy of James R. Moss

The Beetham School. John Taylor's family moved to Hale, Westmoreland, in his 10th or 11th year and he attended this school, which was located about one mile north of his home.

prayer and other religious activities. His zeal and native abilities of expression made such an impression upon Church leaders that he was appointed a lay preacher at the age of 17. While walking to an appointment, he was overcome by a powerful influence. He turned to his companion and said, "I have a strong impression on my mind, that I have to go to America to preach the gospel!" (quoted in Roberts, *Life of John Taylor*, 28).

John Taylor's parents moved to Toronto, Canada, in 1830. In 1832 the way opened up for John to join them. While still in the English Channel, his ship encountered weather so severe that several vessels around it were wrecked in the storm. The officers and crew expected their own ship to sink at any time but John remained unshaken.



Young John Taylor

"The voice of the Spirit was still saying within him, 'You must yet go to America and preach the gospel.' 'So confident was I of my destiny,' he remarks, 'that I went on deck at midnight, and amidst the raging elements felt as calm as though I was sitting in a parlor at home. I believed I should reach America and perform my work'" (Roberts, *Life of John Taylor*, 29).

## Studying the Scriptures Helped Him Find the Church of Jesus Christ and His Wife

[3.2]

John Taylor settled in Canada near his parents. There he practiced his craft. Aligning himself with the local Methodist Church, he was soon occupied as a class teacher and itinerant preacher. It was while he was engaged in this work that he met Leonora Cannon. Leonora, 12 years older than John, rejected his first proposal of marriage, but afterward, as a result of a dream, was convinced that she should be his wife.



Leonora Cannon Taylor (1796–1868), wife of John Taylor

John Taylor and a few close friends discovered from their studies that their faith differed significantly from the New Testament church and teachings of Jesus Christ. Of this experience he later said: “Not being then acquainted with this Church [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints], a number of us met together for the purpose of searching the Scriptures; and we found that certain doctrines were taught by Jesus and the Apostles,

which neither the Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, nor any of the religious sects taught; and we concluded that if the Bible was true, the doctrines of modern Christendom were not true; or if they were true, the Bible was false. Our investigations were impartially made, and our search for truth was extended. We examined every religious principle that came under our notice, and probed the various systems as taught by the sects, to ascertain if there were any that were in accordance with the word of God. But we failed to find any. In addition to our researches and investigations, we prayed and fasted before God; and the substance of our prayers was, that if He had a people upon the earth anywhere, and ministers who were authorized to preach the Gospel, that He would send us one. This was the condition we were in” (“Discourse,” *Deseret News Weekly*, Apr. 5, 1882, 162).

## Parley P. Pratt Brought Answers to His Prayerful Inquiries [3.3]

Elder Parley P. Pratt, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, went to Canada to proclaim the restoration of Christ’s ancient church. He found John Taylor, who studied, compared, reflected, challenged, and then sought the inspiration of heaven. John’s search for Christ’s church was fulfilled.

John Taylor said: “About this time [May 1836] Parley P. Pratt called on me with a letter of introduction from a merchant of my acquaintance. I had peculiar feelings on seeing him. I had heard a great many stories of a similar kind to those that you have heard, and I must say that I thought my friend had imposed upon me a little in sending a man of this persuasion to me. I, however, received him courteously as I was bound to. I told him, however, plainly, my feelings, and that in our researches I wanted no fables; I wished him to confine himself to the scriptures. We talked for three hours or upwards, and he bound me as close to the scriptures as I desired, proving everything he said therefrom. I afterwards wrote down eight sermons that he preached, in order that I might compare them with the word of God. I found nothing contrary. I then examined the Book of Mormon, and the prophecies concerning that; that was also correct. I then read the book of ‘Doctrine and Covenants;’ found nothing unscriptural there. He called upon us to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, and, we should receive the Holy Ghost. But what is that? we inquired; the same, he answered, as it was in the Apostles’ days, or nothing. A number of others and myself were baptized [on May 9, 1836]” (“Three Nights’ Public Discussion . . .,” in *A Series of Pamphlets, by Orson Pratt* . . . [1851], 17–18).



Parley P. Pratt

Soon after his baptism, John Taylor was called to be the presiding elder of the Church in Canada. The inspired call of Elder Pratt to preach the gospel to the people of Toronto, Canada, did not only bring in the man who would become the third President of the Church; it also led to the

conversion of Mary Fielding, who married Hyrum Smith and was the mother of President Joseph F. Smith and the grandmother of President Joseph Fielding Smith.



The Kirtland Temple

## He Was an Advocate for the Prophet Joseph Smith [3.4]

Nearly a year after his conversion, John Taylor met the Prophet Joseph Smith in Kirtland, Ohio. When they had clasped hands and had spent some time together, the spirit that radiated from the Prophet, together with his teachings and explanations of the gospel, greatly strengthened John's testimony of the restored Church.

He visited in Kirtland during the dark days of apostasy there and defended the Prophet Joseph Smith with his testimony before gatherings of apostates who threatened death to anyone who spoke for the Prophet. He also met with members of the Church whose faith was failing and who had begun to be critical of the Prophet. Among their number was Elder Parley P. Pratt, who made it a point to express his complaints and criticisms. To this Apostle and missionary whose teachings and testimony had, only a short time before, brought him into the Church, John Taylor replied: "I am surprised to hear you speak so, Brother Parley. Before you left Canada you bore a strong testimony to Joseph Smith being a Prophet of God, and to the truth of the work he has inaugurated; and you said you knew these things by revelation, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. You gave to me a strict charge to the effect that though you or an angel from heaven was to declare anything else I was not to believe it. Now Brother Parley, it is not man that I am following, but the Lord. The principles you taught me led me to Him, and I now have the same testimony that you then rejoiced in. If the work was true six months ago, it is true today; if Joseph Smith was then a prophet, he is now a prophet" (quoted in Roberts, *Life of John Taylor*, 40).

Elder Pratt "sought no further to lead Elder Taylor astray; nor did he use much argument in the first place. 'He with many others,' says Elder Taylor, 'were passing under a dark cloud; he soon made all right with the Prophet Joseph, and was restored to full fellowship'" (Roberts, *Life of John Taylor*, 40).

During those dark days in Kirtland, the apostates sought to be heard. One man spoke who was full of lies and lashed out viciously against the character of the Prophet Joseph Smith, who was not present. John Taylor stood it as long as he could, then sought and received permission to address the group. He began by recalling the rebellion of ancient Israel against the Lord and his prophet Moses. He then asked the audience to identify the source of their present knowledge of the kingdom of God and of all spiritual matters. To his own question, he replied: "It was Joseph Smith, under the Almighty, who developed the first principles, and to him we must look for further instructions. If the spirit which he manifests does not bring blessings, I am very much afraid that the one manifested by those who have spoken, will not be very likely to secure them. The children of Israel, formerly, after seeing the power of God manifested in their midst, fell into rebellion and idolatry, and there is certainly very great danger of us doing the same thing" (quoted in Roberts, *Life of John Taylor*, 41).

These incidents in Kirtland established John Taylor's reputation as a man of great courage and eloquence in defending the gospel. It was under different circumstances, however, that he became known as the "Champion of Liberty." As Brother Taylor was called upon to defend the rights of the Church and its members against their enemies, this Englishman quickly learned to appreciate the constitutional freedoms guaranteed by law to everyone living in the United States.

## He Was Called to the Apostleship and to Serve a Mission to Europe [3.5]

At age 29, John Taylor received a summons from the Prophet Joseph Smith to join the Saints in Missouri. Those were dark days; the faithful had been driven from Ohio, and shortly after he arrived in Missouri after an arduous journey of nearly 2,000 miles, the Saints were driven from Missouri as well.

Elder Taylor was called and ordained to the apostleship on December 19, 1838, a few days after his 30th birthday. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles had been directed by revelation to leave Far West, Missouri, on April 26, 1839, and journey to England (see D&C 118).



The brethren who went on these missions left their families in poverty and illness. **Elder Taylor** wrote of his mixed feelings at the time of his departure for England: “The thought of the hardships they had just endured, . . . the uncertainty of their continuing in the house they then occupied—and that only a solitary room—the prevalence of disease,

the poverty of the brethren, their insecurity from mobs, together with the uncertainty of what might take place during my absence, produced feelings of no ordinary character. . . . But the thought of going forth at the command of the God of Israel to revisit my native land, to unfold the principles of eternal truth and make known the things that God had revealed for the salvation of the world, overcame every other feeling” (quoted in Roberts, *Life of John Taylor*, 67–68).

Elder Taylor himself was penniless and in very poor health. Yet, like his companions, he felt that their trials were but for a small moment, and he knew that the Lord would provide for their needs. With Brigham Young and others, he made his way back through Missouri so they could leave for their mission to England on the day and from the place the Lord had commanded (see D&C 118:4–5).

## He Bore Witness in Liverpool, England [3.6]

After an arduous journey, Elder John Taylor and his missionary companion arrived in England and were assigned to labor in the port city of Liverpool. There they met with members of a Protestant congregation who were seeking for the restoration of the Holy Ghost and the coming of Christ’s kingdom. Speaking to some leaders of the group, **Elder Taylor** bore a powerful testimony of the restoration of the gifts and blessings they sought:

“Brethren and friends, we are the humble followers of Jesus Christ and are from America. I lately arrived in this place, and have come five thousand miles without purse or scrip, and I testify to you, my brethren, that the Lord has revealed Himself from heaven and put us in possession of these things you are so anxiously looking for and praying that you may receive. (“Glory be to

God,” was shouted by many present, and great emotion manifested.)

“That thing has taken place which is spoken of by John in the Revelations, where he says: ‘I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell upon the earth, and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come.’ Brethren, we the servants of God are come to this place to warn the inhabitants of their approaching danger, and to call upon them to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and they shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

“I feel an anxious desire to deliver this testimony. I feel the word of the Lord like fire in my bones and am desirous to have an opportunity of proclaiming to you those blessings that you are looking for, that you may rejoice with us in those glorious things which God has revealed for the salvation of the world in the last days” (quoted in Roberts, *Life of John Taylor*, 77–78).

It was fitting that in one of his first sermons in England Elder John Taylor should bear witness of the vision of an angel with a trumpet that he had seen many years before he joined the Church. That vision had been fulfilled; the angel had come and the gospel had been restored. Through Elder Taylor’s continued efforts, 10 people from that congregation were soon baptized. From this initial beginning, the work moved ahead rapidly and a large branch of the Church was established in Liverpool.



## He Endured Opposition in the Isle of Man [3.7]

While serving as a missionary in the British Isles, Elder John Taylor labored for a period of time on the beautiful Isle of Man, in the Irish Sea, the birthplace and girlhood home of his wife, Leonora. In nearly every area of his mission he was challenged by the local clergy to defend the restored gospel. On the Isle of Man, four ministers challenged him. Reverend Robert Heys strongly opposed the Church’s claim to have been founded on new revelation. Reverend Heys based his claim on three passages from the Bible that appeared to forbid new revelation being added to the scriptures.



While in the British Isles, Elder Taylor briefly visited Ireland. There he met Thomas Tait. While walking near Loch Brickland, Mr. Tait asked to be baptized and was the first person the missionaries baptized in Ireland.

Elder John Taylor made the following reply: "This [Reverend Heys' argument that 'God has decreed and declared that *nothing shall be either added to . . . or taken from*' the Bible] certainly must be a *new revelation*, for such a *decree* or *declaration* is not to be found in the whole of the sacred writings! It is true, he quotes three passages—one from Deuteronomy [see Deuteronomy 4:2], one from Proverbs [see Proverbs 30:5–6], and another from Revelation [see Revelation 22:18–19]; but not one of them contains the decree! That in Deuteronomy refers exclusively to the Book of the Law. If they declared the revelation of God to be *complete*, the other scriptures could never have been written. That in Proverbs refers to the portion of the sacred writings then in existence. If it declared the Holy Scriptures were *complete*, there would not have been afterwards a continued written revelation. That in the Revelation refers to the Apocalypse alone, it being, when written, a separate book, unconnected with the other books of the New Testament which were not then collected; it could not, therefore, have reference to any other book or books of the Holy Scriptures. According to his own interpretation of the above scriptures, in quoting from Proverbs, he would reject the New Testament and all the prophets that prophesied after Solomon's day; and in his quotation from Deuteronomy, he would reject all the Bible but the five books of Moses. But let Mr. [Heys] take care that he himself is not incurring the curse by altering the meaning of the words of the very books to which the prohibition positively and particularly refers!" (quoted in Roberts, *Life of John Taylor*, 94–95).

Adversity and opposition can help in building the kingdom of God. The opposition Elder Taylor faced on the Isle of Man drew many people to the debates, and they found that his message contained answers to their questions. Elder Taylor and his missionary companion founded a thriving branch of the Church on the island before returning to England.

John Taylor had left England several years before, saying he felt strongly that he should go to America and preach the gospel. Ironically, he went to America and *found* the gospel; then he was called back to England to *preach* the gospel.



## The Spirit of Gathering Moved upon the Saints [3.8]

"When the Apostles started on their missions, the Prophet Joseph had instructed them to say nothing, for the present, in relation to the gathering of the people. It was doubtless the unsettled state of the Church at that time which led him to give such counsel. The instructions were, of course, followed by the Apostles; but no sooner were the people baptized than they were seized with a desire to gather with the main body of the Church. 'I find it difficult to keep anything from the Saints,' writes Elder Taylor, 'for the Spirit of God reveals it to them. . . . Some time ago Sister Mitchel dreamed that she, her husband and a number of others were on board a vessel, and that there were other vessels, loaded with Saints, going



Nauvoo, Illinois

somewhere. She felt very happy and was rejoicing in the Lord' " (Roberts, *Life of John Taylor*, 96).

After the troubles in Missouri had been ended by the exodus of the Church to Illinois, and after the Prophet had communicated with the Apostles in England that emigration could commence, Elder John Taylor then assisted in the founding of a permanent shipping agency in Liverpool and helped more than 800 converts immigrate to America.

### He Gave a Mission Report to the British Saints [3.9]

Before departing for Nauvoo with the other Apostles in the early part of 1841, Elder John Taylor wrote a report of his labors to the Saints in England. In it he said: "I feel to rejoice before God that He has blessed my humble endeavours to promote his cause and kingdom and for all the blessings that I have received from this island; for although I have travelled 5,000 miles without purse or scrip, besides travelling so far in this country on railroads, coaches, steamboats, waggons, on horseback, and almost every way, and been amongst strangers and in strange lands, I have never for once been at a loss for either money, clothes, friends, or a home, from that day until now; neither have I ever asked a person for a farthing. Thus I have proved the Lord, and I know that he is according to his word. And now as I am going away, I bear testimony that this work is of God—that he has spoken from the heavens—that Joseph Smith is a prophet of the Lord—that the Book of Mormon is true; and I know that this work will roll on until 'the kingdoms of this

world become the kingdoms of our God and his Christ' " ("Communications," *Millennial Star*, May 1841, 15–16).

Throughout his assigned mission in England, Elder Taylor raised the warning voice. Thousands flocked to the standard of truth he helped to hold aloft. He published and defended the faith in England and then returned to Nauvoo.

### He Petitioned Congress [3.10]

As early as 1831, members of the Church had begun settling western Missouri. By April 1832 trouble arose between the members and their neighbors. The Latter-day Saints were initially driven from county to county, and then by the fall of 1838 they were driven from the state of Missouri to Illinois. In 1839 Church members began writing affidavits legally documenting the injustices in an effort to obtain reparations for their sufferings.

After they were driven from their settlements in Missouri, Church members made at least three attempts to obtain redress from the United States Congress. Elder John Taylor was one of the leaders appointed to petition Congress for redress of the wrongs that had been heaped upon the Latter-day Saints in America. All of the attempts for redress were rejected or ignored by the government.

### He Served in Many Positions in Nauvoo [3.11]

John Taylor was judge advocate and colonel in the Nauvoo Legion, a member of the Nauvoo City Council, and a regent of the University of Nauvoo. He served as editor of the *Times and Seasons*, the official newspaper of the Church, and editor of the *Nauvoo Neighbor*. The *Nauvoo Neighbor* was published from May 1843–October 1845. It reported the actions of the Nauvoo City Council, local courts, state legislature, and national and international news. The newspaper had regular articles dealing with local interests, such as agriculture, literature, science, and religion. In all of his writings, John Taylor was fearless in his efforts to defend the Church and the Prophet Joseph Smith.



John Taylor's home in Nauvoo



Interior of John Taylor's home

## A New Order of Marriage Was Revealed [3.12]

Returning to Nauvoo, the Twelve Apostles confronted a challenge unlike any they had ever faced in their missionary labors. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught them the need for the restoration of celestial marriage, including the doctrine of plural wives. This was difficult for them.

Of his feelings, **Elder John Taylor** wrote: "I had always entertained strict ideas of virtue, and I felt as a married man that this was to me, outside of this principle, an appalling thing to do. The idea of going and asking a young lady to be married to me when I had already a wife! It was a thing calculated to stir up feelings from the innermost depths of the human soul. I had always

entertained the strictest regard of chastity. . . . Hence, with the feelings I had entertained, nothing but a knowledge of God, and the revelations of God, and the truth of them, could have induced me to embrace such a principle as this" (quoted in Roberts, *Life of John Taylor*, 100).

Obedient to the Prophet's counsel, and with Leonora's consent, Elder Taylor entered into plural marriage and became one of the Church's chief spokesmen in its defense throughout the remainder of his life.

Plural marriage was perhaps the most difficult of God's laws that some of the early Saints were called upon to live. But it served the Lord's purpose and it was a timely test of their faith in the Lord and of their obedience to His mouthpiece on the earth.

## Joseph Smith Was Nominated President of the United States [3.13]

In February 1842, Elder John Taylor became the associate editor (and later the editor) of the Church publication *Times and Seasons*. A year later, he assumed the editorial post for the *Nauvoo Neighbor*, a weekly newspaper. Elder Taylor's columns soon became noted for their powerful and forthright spirit.

The year 1844 was a presidential election year. The Saints had strong objections to the candidates of both national parties. Both of the major parties had been contacted, but neither would promise to give any help in preserving the constitutional rights of the Saints. There were even strong indications that plans would be laid to persecute the Saints further after the election had been held.

In Illinois the Saints comprised a substantial voting block. In an editorial in the *Nauvoo Neighbor*, **Elder John Taylor** nominated the Prophet Joseph Smith for president of the United States. Among his reasons for doing so, he stated:



John Taylor's sons

“Under existing circumstances we have no other alternative, and if we can accomplish our object well, if not we shall have the satisfaction of knowing that we have acted conscientiously and have used our best judgment; and if we have to throw away our votes, we had better do so upon a worthy, rather than upon an unworthy individual, who might make use of the weapon we put in his hand to destroy us with” (“Who Shall Be Our Next President!” *Nauvoo Neighbor*, Feb. 14, 1844).



Examples of newspapers, books, and pamphlets published by John Taylor

### He Honored the Laws of the Land [3.14]

Today, the Church seeks to remain politically neutral, but the Saints are urged to take an active role in choosing those by whom they will be governed. Members are counseled to elect responsible, moral individuals who will seek to uphold the sovereign rights and freedoms due mankind and those who will respond to the righteous will of the people. Latter-day Saints are encouraged to emulate Elder John Taylor’s example of speaking out on issues that have vital effects on the well-being of the nation and its citizens. In another editorial, **Elder Taylor** explained why it is essential that we allow our voices to be heard:

“Certainly if any person ought to interfere in political matters it should be those whose minds and judgments are influenced by correct principles—religious as well as political; otherwise those persons professing religion would have to be governed by those who make no professions; be subject to their rule; have the law and word of God trampled under foot, and become as wicked as Sodom and as corrupt as Gomorrah, and be prepared for final destruction. We are told ‘when the wicked rule the people mourn’ [D&C 98:9]. This we have abundantly proved in the state of Missouri, and having had our fingers once burned, we dread the fire. The cause of

humanity, the cause of justice, the cause of freedom, the cause of patriotism, and the cause of God requires us to use our endeavours to put in righteous rulers. Our revelations tell us to *seek diligently* for good and for wise men [see D&C 98:4–10]. . . .

“Let every man then that hates oppression, and loves the cause of right, not only vote himself; but use his influence to obtain the votes of others, that we may by every legal means support that man whose election will secure the greatest amount of good to the nation at large” (“Religion and Politics,” *Times and Seasons*, Mar. 15, 1844, 471).

### He Was Wounded in Carthage Jail [3.15]

When the Prophet Joseph Smith went to Carthage Jail, Elder John Taylor went with him. He slept in the same cell, offered support and comfort, refused to leave the jail when the opportunity for liberty and life was extended, sang a hymn that embodied the highest principles of his own and the Prophet’s sacrifice (“A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief”), parried away the guns at the door of the cell, and, failing in that effort, was wounded himself. Escape was impossible. He was shot four times, and he lived.

It was shortly after 5:00 on the hot afternoon of June 27, 1844. The mob had fled in panic once their evil purpose had been accomplished. Joseph Smith, the prophet who was called to head the last and greatest gospel dispensation, lay dead outside the jail near the well, where he had plunged from the upper story window. His beloved older brother Hyrum lay dead on the floor of the room in which they had been held prisoners. The terribly wounded John Taylor lay on some straw and under an old filthy mattress in the next room where he had been hastily dragged by Willard Richards to hide him from the murderers. The same fate might have been his, but the Lord decreed otherwise. There were yet missions to fulfill and callings to come.

Referring to his experience at the martyrdom, **President John Taylor** said 40 years later: “Was there anything surprising in all this?

No. If they killed Jesus in former times, would not the same feeling and influence bring about the same results in these times? I had counted the cost when I first started out, and stood prepared to meet it” (“Discourse,” *Deseret News Weekly*, Mar. 5, 1884, 98).



Carthage Jail, Carthage, Illinois



The upper room of the Carthage Jail where the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were martyred and John Taylor was wounded

## He Rebuked Those Who Believed the Church Would Fall with Joseph Smith's Death [3.16]

The deaths of the Prophet Joseph and Hyrum Smith caused many enemies of the Church—and even some members of the Church—to feel that the Church would fall. In a *Times and Seasons* editorial, **Elder John Taylor** contended otherwise. It was, he said, the Lord's church—not man's.

"The idea of the church being disorganized and broken up because of the Prophet and Patriarch being slain, is preposterous. This church has the seeds of immortality in its midst. It is not of man, nor by man—it is the offspring of Deity: it is organized after the pattern of heavenly things, through the principles of revelation; by the opening of the heavens, by the ministering of angels, and the revelations of Jehovah. It is not affected by the death of one or two, or fifty individuals; it possesses a priesthood after the order of Melchisedec, having the power of an endless life, 'without beginning of days, or end of years.' It is organized for the purpose of saving this generation, and generations that are past; it exists in time and will exist in eternity. This church fail? No! Times and seasons may change, revolution may succeed revolution, thrones may be cast down, and empires be dissolved, earthquakes may rend the earth from centre to circumference,



John Taylor's watch, which was damaged during the mob attack in Carthage Jail.

the mountains may be hurled out of their places, and the mighty ocean be moved from its bed; but amidst the crash of worlds and the crack of matter, truth, eternal truth, must remain unchanged, and those principles which God has revealed to his Saints be unscathed amidst the warring elements, and remain as firm as the throne of Jehovah" ("The City of Nauvoo," *Times and Seasons*, Dec. 15, 1844, 744).

## He Defended the Rights of the Saints in Nauvoo [3.17]

Following the martyrdom, enemies of the Church began to circulate false statements about the Church and its members as a basis upon which to drive the Saints out of Nauvoo. Raiding parties burned homes, stole cattle, murdered men, and drove women and children out of their homes.

Civil authorities offered no protection, so a state military militia was sent to maintain order so that the Saints could have a season of peace in which to prepare to move west. This militia did not defend the rights of the Saints, but sat idly by while the mobs further outraged the privacy and property of the Saints. Angered by this callous disregard for the rights of the Saints, Elder John Taylor met with the militia commander, Major Warren, to protest their inaction. In turn, Major Warren upbraided the Saints for resisting the law. **Elder Taylor** replied:

"Major Warren, I stand before you as a man who has received deep injury from the citizens of this state and consequently have some feelings. You talk, sir, about 'the majesty of the law, and maintaining the law:' why, sir, the law to us is a mere farce. For years past the law has been made use of only as an engine of oppression. We have received no protection from it. . . .

" . . . You talk about the majesty of the law! What has become of those murderers [of the Prophet and his brother]? Have they been hung or shot, or in any way punished? No, sir, you know they have not. . . . They are still burning houses under your supervision; and you have either been unwilling or unable to stop them. Houses have been burned since your arrival here; men have been kidnapped, cattle stolen, our brethren abused and robbed when going after their corn. Are we to stand still and let marauders and house-burners come into our city . . . and yet offer no resistance to their nefarious deeds? Are we to be held still by you, sir, while they thrust the hot iron into us? I tell you plainly for one I will not do it. I speak now on my own responsibility, and I tell you, sir, I will not stand it. . . . [My brethren] shall not be abused under pretext of law or anything else; and there is



The Mormon Battalion

not a patriot in the world but what would bear me out in it" (quoted in Roberts, *Life of John Taylor*, 163–65).

### He Was a "Champion of Liberty" [3.18]

Months later, the Saints were encamped at Council Bluffs, Iowa, when they were approached by Captain Allen, an officer of the United States Army. Captain Allen had come to seek the enlistment of 500 men to assist in the Mexican War. Feelings of loyalty and patriotism were somewhat strained among the pioneers.

In a speech, **Elder John Taylor** recognized such strained feelings when he said: "Many have felt something like rebelling against the government of the United States. I have myself felt swearing mad at the government for the treatment we have received at the hands of those in authority, although I don't know that I ever swore much. We have had cause to feel as we have, and any man having a spark of the love of liberty in him would have felt likewise" (quoted in Roberts, *Life of John Taylor*, 173).

In spite of those legitimate feelings, Elder Taylor then made a motion to trust the government and raise what is known today as the Mormon Battalion. His motion carried. This "Champion of Liberty" was as concerned with supporting his country as he was with fighting for the constitutional rights of the Saints.

### He Assisted with the Migration West and Continued Missionary Efforts [3.19]

Elder John Taylor sustained President Brigham Young as the leader of the Church and helped him in the exodus of the Latter-day Saints as they moved to the West. He served another mission to England and then, with Elder Parley P. Pratt, led the second group west, over 1,500 in number, and arrived in the Salt Lake Valley on October 5, 1847.

The pioneers had been in the Great Basin only two years when President Young called four Apostles to again preach the gospel in Europe. Franklin D. Richards was called to Great Britain, Lorenzo Snow to Italy, Erastus Snow to Denmark, and John Taylor to France and Germany. In France, Elder Taylor established four branches of the Church, with about 400 members. One of the great accomplishments of this mission was the publication of the Book of Mormon into the French and German languages.

### He Defended the Character of Joseph Smith [3.20]

While laboring on his mission in Boulogne, France, Elder John Taylor was challenged to a debate by three ministers. In the course of the debate, these ministers attacked the character of the Prophet Joseph Smith. In defense of the Prophet, **Elder Taylor** said:

"I testify that I was acquainted with Joseph Smith for years. I have travelled with him; I have been with him in private and in public; I have associated with him in councils of all kinds; I have listened hundreds of times to his public teachings, and his advice to his friends and associates of a more private nature. I have been at his house and seen his deportment in his family. I have seen him arraigned before the tribunals of his country, and seen him honourably acquitted, and delivered from the pernicious breath of slander, and the machinations and falsehoods of wicked and corrupt men. I was with him living, and with him when he died, when he was murdered in Carthage gaol [jail] by a ruthless mob, headed by a Methodist minister, named Williams, with their faces painted. I was there and was myself wounded: I at that time received four balls in my body. I have seen him, then, under these various circumstances, and I testify before God, angels, and men, that he was a good,



A bilingual copy of the Book of Mormon. Early French and German translations of the Book of Mormon were printed in one book, with the left-hand page in German and the right-hand page in French.

honourable, virtuous man—that his doctrines were good, scriptural, and wholesome—that his precepts were such as became a man of God—that his private and public character was unimpeachable—and that he lived and died as a man of God and a gentleman. This is my testimony; if it is disputed, bring me a person authorized to receive an affidavit, and I will make one to this effect" ("Three Nights' Public Discussion," in *A Series of Pamphlets*, by Orson Pratt, 23–24).

## He Went on a Printer's Mission to New York City [3.21]

In 1852, the doctrine of plural marriage was publicly announced. However, based on the reports of corrupt apostates, gross misrepresentations of the practice were being described in the nation's press. In order to stem the tide of prejudice, Elder John Taylor and four other brethren were called upon to publish newspapers across the United States in defense of the Church. In New York City, New York, Elder Taylor opened the offices of *The Mormon* squarely between the offices of the *New York Herald* and the *New York Tribune*, the two newspapers most critical of the Church.



Engraving of the New York newspaper district

In the first issue of *The Mormon*, Elder John Taylor explained the editorial point of view of the newspaper: "We have no particular standard, except the broad platform of truth—religious, political, social, moral, and philosophical. We are not bound down to any particular party, or creed; either religious or political. It is true we are Mormon, inside and outside, at home and abroad, in public and private, everywhere. We are so, however, from principle. We are such, not because we believe it to be more popular, lucrative, or honorable, (as the world has it); but because we believe it to be more true, more reasonable and scriptural, moral and philosophic; because we conscientiously believe that it is more calculated to promote the happiness and well being of humanity, in time and throughout all eternity, than any other system which we have met with" ("Introductory Address," *The Mormon*, Feb. 17, 1855, 2).

It took courage to defend the Church in the bold and forthright manner that Elder Taylor defended it. President Brigham Young said: "With regard to the labors of Brother Taylor in editing the paper called *The Mormon*, published in the city of New York, I have heard many remarks concerning the editorials in that paper, not only from the Saints, but from those who do not profess to believe the religion we have embraced; and it is probably one of the strongest edited papers that is now published" (quoted in Roberts, *Life of John Taylor*, 271).

## He Appealed to President Buchanan [3.22]

In a step toward statehood, Utah received territorial status in 1850. Brigham Young was appointed its first governor by President Millard Fillmore, but many other positions were filled by unfriendly government appointees from other areas of the country. Some of these officials were not honorable men. Nearly all lacked

familiarity and sensitivity to the standards, ideals, and goals of the Church.

In 1857, President James Buchanan received reports from one corrupt territorial judge charging that the Mormons had destroyed federal court records, resisted all federal laws, were disloyal to the country, and were obedient only to Brigham Young. The accusations were purely ludicrous, but without further investigation Buchanan appointed Alfred Cumming of Georgia as the new governor of Utah and sent a force of 2,500 troops to escort Cumming to Utah and resolve the so-called “Utah rebellion.” Further, he made no attempt to notify Governor Young of his plans. Thus, when scattered reports of the “Utah Expedition” reached the Saints, they feared the worst and prepared for war.

Called home from his New York mission, **Elder John Taylor** prepared a memorandum addressed to the president and the Congress of the United States, which read, in part:

“We appeal to you as American citizens who have been wronged, insulted, abused and persecuted; driven before our relentless foes from city to city—from state to state—until we were finally expelled from the confines of civilization to seek a shelter in a barren, inhospitable clime, amid the wild, savage tribes of the desert plains. We claim to be a portion of the people, and as such have rights that must be respected, and which we have a right to demand. We claim that in a republican form of government, such as our fathers established, and such as ours still professes



United States President James Buchanan

to be, the officers are and should be the servants of the people—not their masters, dictators or tyrants.

“To the numerous charges of our enemies we plead not guilty, and challenge the world before any just tribunal to the proof. . . . Try on the plaster of friendly intercourse and honorable dealing instead of foul aggression and war. Treat us as friends—as citizens entitled to and possessing equal rights with our fellows—and not as alien enemies, lest you make us such. . . . All we want is the truth and fair play. The administration have been imposed upon by false, designing men; their acts have been precipitate and hasty, perhaps through lack of due consideration. Please to let us know what you want of us before you prepare your halters to hang, or ‘apply the knife to cut out the loathsome, disgusting ulcer.’ Do you wish us to deny our God and renounce our religion? That we shall not do. . . . Withdraw your troops, give us our Constitutional rights and we are at home” (quoted in Roberts, *Life of John Taylor*, 294–95).

## John Taylor Saw the Lord’s Hand in Preserving the Saints [3.23]

Although the Saints were prepared to resist the advancing army, if necessary, they did all they could to avoid such a confrontation. Negotiations began to successfully resolve the misunderstandings. The United States army sent Captain Stewart Van Vliet on assignment into Salt Lake City. Captain Van Vliet did not find what he expected. Upon his return to the encamped army to report the results of his investigation, he had radically altered his views and advocated a peaceful reconciliation.

The Saints succeeded in holding the army out of the Salt Lake Valley until the spring of 1858. When the army was permitted to enter, on a promise of good behavior, they found the Saints ready to set fire to their homes rather than submit to unlawful oppression. Speaking in the Salt Lake Tabernacle in December 1857, Elder **John Taylor** said:

“I do not remember having read in any history or had related to me any circumstance where an army has been subjugated so easily and their power wasted away so effectually without bloodshed as this in our borders. If this is not the manifestation of the power of God to us, I do not know what is. Has any man’s life been lost in it? No; not one. . . .

“Suppose Uncle Sam should rise up in his red hot wrath and send fifty thousand men here . . . —who of us can tell the result? I speak of these things that we may reflect. Who can tell what will come next? Who knows about the



Johnston’s Army

future? You see the position we are placed in, that we are dependent on the Lord and on his counsel, and all that we can do or say will be according to that from this time henceforth and for ever. Zion begins to rise, her light being come. The glory of the Lord is rising upon us. . . .

“What if we should be driven to the mountains, let us be driven. What if we have to burn our houses, why, set fire to them with a good grace and dance a jig round them while they are burning. What do I care about these things? We are in the hands of God and all is right” (“Discourse,” *Deseret News Weekly*, Dec. 16, 1857, 324).



The First Presidency, October 10, 1880: George Q. Cannon, John Taylor, and Joseph F. Smith

## The Apostles Led the Church from 1877–80 [3.24]

At the death of President Brigham Young on August 29, 1877, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles became the presiding quorum of the Church. Formally sustained on September 4, 1877, the Twelve, with John Taylor as Quorum President, stood in place of the First Presidency until the First Presidency was formally reorganized on October 10, 1880. (The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles had also presided from the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith on June 27, 1844, until Brigham Young was sustained as President of the Church on December 27, 1847.)

## The Lord Preserved John Taylor’s Life [3.25]

John Taylor’s life was preserved during the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph and Hyrum Smith at Carthage Jail. The Lord confirmed this in a revelation given January 26, 1880, to **Elder Wilford Woodruff**, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “I the Lord have raised up unto you my servant, John Taylor, to preside over you and to be a lawgiver unto my Church. He has mingled his blood with that of the martyred prophets. Nevertheless, while I have taken my servants Joseph and Hyrum Smith unto myself, I have preserved my servant John Taylor for a wise purpose in me” (*Wilford Woodruff’s Journal, 1833–1898 Typescript*, ed. Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. [1983–85], 7:620; punctuation, capitalization, and spelling standardized).

**President John Taylor** had a special mission to fulfill, and he led the Church through a decade of great crises. During the Pioneer Day celebration on July 24, 1880, he prophetically stated: “There are events in the future, and not very far ahead, that will require all our faith, all our energy, all our confidence, all our trust in God, to enable us to withstand the influences that will be brought to bear against us. . . . We cannot trust in our intelligence; we cannot trust in our wealth; we cannot trust to any surrounding circumstances with which we are enveloped; we must trust alone in the living God to guide us, to direct us, to lead us, to teach us and to instruct us. And there never was a time when we needed to be more humble and more prayerful; there never was a time when we needed more fidelity, self-denial, and adherence to the principles of truth, than we do this day” (quoted in Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History*, 26th ed. [1950], 479).

## A Year of Jubilee Was Celebrated [3.26]

Although storm clouds were on the horizon, there was an air of general rejoicing among the Saints in 1880. It was the 50th anniversary of the restoration of the Church. In ancient Israel every 50th year was a jubilee—a time to forgive indebtedness and to bless the poor. **President John Taylor** resolved that this should be the theme:

“It occurred to me that we ought to do something, as they did in former times, to relieve those that are oppressed with debt, to assist those that are needy, to break the yoke off those that may feel themselves crowded upon, and to make it a time of general rejoicing” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1880, 61).



President John Taylor dedicated the Logan Utah Temple on May 17, 1884.

The Church canceled the debts of the worthy poor who had received money from the Perpetual Emigration Fund to help them move to Utah and who, after having arrived, had experienced failure and hardship to the extent that they were not able to repay their debt to the fund.

President Taylor gave the following counsel to the more affluent members:

“The rich . . . have a fitting

opportunity for remembering the Lord’s poor. If you are holding their notes and they are unable to pay, forgive the interest and the principal, or as much thereof as you might desire them to forgive were their and your circumstances reversed, thus doing unto others as you would that others should do unto you. For upon this hang the law and the prophets. If you have mortgages upon the homes of your brethren and sisters who are poor, worthy and honest, and who desire to pay you but cannot, free them in whole or in part. Extend to them a jubilee, if you can consistently. You will have their faith and prayers and confidence, which may be worth more than money” (quoted in Roberts, *Life of John Taylor*, 336–37).



The Gardo House, President Taylor’s residence



## A Somber Prophecy Was Fulfilled [3.27]

Dense clouds and heavy rains marked the April general conference of 1882. The weather seemed prophetic of the days ahead. It had been 19 months since President John Taylor had warned of influences that would gather against the Church. Now those influences began to make themselves felt. In the fall of 1881, ministers of various denominations began clamoring for stricter laws relating to the practice of plural marriage. On March 22, 1882, the president of the United States signed into law the Edmunds Bill, which disfranchised the Church and provided for the fining or imprisonment of all male members who believed in or practiced plural marriage. President Taylor advised Church members to turn up their collars and weather it through:

“We do not wish to place ourselves in a state of antagonism, nor to act defiantly, towards this Government. We will fulfil the letter, so far as practicable, of that unjust, inhuman, oppressive and unconstitutional law, so far as we can without violating principle; but we cannot sacrifice every principle of human right at the behest of corrupt, unreasoning and unprincipled men; we cannot violate the highest and noblest principles of human nature and make pariahs and outcasts of high-minded, virtuous and honorable women, nor sacrifice at the shrine of popular clamor the highest and noblest principles of humanity!

“We shall abide all constitutional law, as we always have done; but while we are Godfearing and law-abiding, and respect all honorable men and officers, we are no craven serfs, and have not learned to lick the feet of oppressors, nor to bow in base submission to unreasoning clamor. We will contend, inch by inch, legally and constitutionally, for our rights as American citizens, and for the universal rights of universal man. We stand proudly erect

in the consciousness of our rights as American citizens, and plant ourselves firmly on the sacred guarantees of the Constitution; and that instrument, while it defines the powers and privileges of the President, Congress and the judiciary, also directly provides that 'the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively or to the people'" ("Discourse," *Deseret News Weekly*, Apr. 26, 1882, 212).

## The Full Fury of the Storm Strikes at the Saints [3.28]

Persecution once again began to plague the Church members and they were no longer safe in the West. During the decade of persecution (1877–87), houses were broken into and ransacked, innocent persons were compelled to accompany federal marshals to places of inquisition, and men were fined and hounded far beyond the legal limits. In the southern United States, many missionaries were mobbed and beaten, and some were killed.

Having heard of the great abuse heaped upon the Church by government officers in Arizona, President John Taylor paid them a visit and recommended that they establish temporary homes in Mexico. Heeding the prophet's counsel, more than 3,000 members of the Church eventually relocated in the state of Chihuahua, Mexico, founding the Mormon Colony cities of Colonia Juarez, Colonia Dublan, and Colonia Diaz (see Roberts, *Life of John Taylor*, 380–83).

President Taylor later advised those living in Cache Valley, Utah, to emigrate to Canada for similar reasons. Many parts of the province of Alberta were settled by Church members.



President Taylor withdrew from the public and a reward was posted for his arrest.

## He Voluntarily Withdrew from Public View [3.29]

Learning of plans for their arrest, and knowing that their imprisonment might provoke members of the Church to retaliate in such a way as to give the courts and officers of the government a pretext upon which to destroy the Church, the members of the First Presidency elected to withdraw from public view and continue their sacred labors.

In his last public address, **President John Taylor** said: "It is for us to do what is right, to fear God, to observe His laws, and keep His commandments, and the Lord will manage all the rest. But no breaking of heads, no bloodshed, no rendering evil for evil. Let us try and cultivate the spirit of the Gospel, and adhere to the principles of truth. Let us honor our God, and be true to those eternal principles which God has given us to hold sacred. Keep them as sacredly as you would the apple of your eye. And while other men are seeking to trample the Constitution under foot, we will try to maintain it" ("Discourse," *Deseret News Weekly*, Feb. 25, 1885, 82).

## "Let Everything Come as God Has Ordained It" [3.30]

When John Taylor was a young man sailing toward an unknown destiny in America, his ship passed through a storm so severe that the captain feared the vessel would sink. Yet John was calm and unafraid. He took little notice of the winds and waves. He knew his life was in God's hands. He was prepared to do whatever the Lord desired of him. Other storms came as his mission unfolded—storms of men and storms of nature. Yet he did not rail against them; he remained calm and serene.

**President John Taylor** once said: "So far as I am concerned I say let everything come as God has ordained it. I do not desire trials, I do not desire affliction; I would pray God to 'leave me not in temptation and deliver me from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory;' but if the earthquake bellows, the lightnings flash, the thunders roll, and the powers of darkness are let loose and the spirit of evil is permitted to rage and an evil influence is brought to bear on the Saints and my life, with theirs, is put to the test, let it come, for we are the Saints of the Most High God and all is well, all is peace, all is right and will be both in time and in eternity" ("Remarks," *Deseret News Weekly*, Aug. 19, 1857, 186).



President Taylor died in the home of Thomas F. Rouché, in Kaysville, Utah.

### He Died in Exile [3.31]

Denied regular access to and separated from his loved ones, and under great strain from the Church's struggles for its constitutional rights, President John Taylor's health failed and he died at the age of 78 in Kaysville, Utah, on July 25, 1887. At his death, he still carried in his body some of the bullets from the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Following his passing, his counselors, **Presidents George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith**, issued a tribute which read, in part:

"Steadfast to and immovable in the truth, few men have ever lived who have manifested such integrity and such unflinching moral and physical courage as our beloved President who has just gone from us. He never knew the feeling of fear connected with the work of God. But in the face of angry mobs, and at other times when in imminent danger of personal violence from those who threatened his life, and upon occasions when the people were menaced with public peril, he never blenched—his knees never trembled, his hand never shook. Every Latter-day Saint always knew beforehand, on occasions when firmness and courage were needed, where President John Taylor would be found and what his tone would be. He met every issue squarely, boldly and in a way to call forth the admiration of all who saw and heard him. Undaunted courage, unyielding firmness were among his most prominent characteristics, giving him distinction among men who were distinguished for the same qualities. With these were combined an intense love of freedom and hatred of oppression. He was a man whom all could trust, and throughout his life he enjoyed, to an extent surpassed by none, the implicit confidence of the Prophets Joseph, Hyrum and Brigham and all the leading

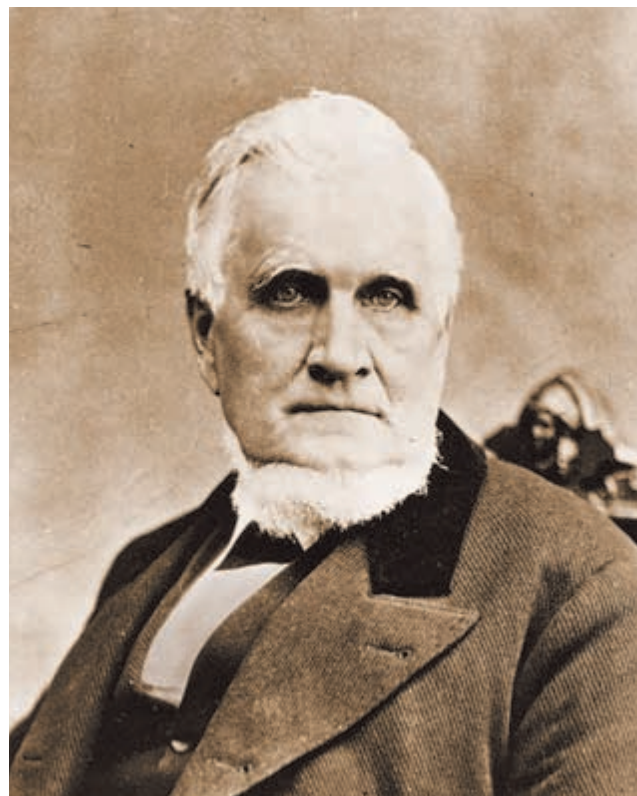
men and members of the Church. The title of 'Champion of Liberty,' which he received at Nauvoo, was always felt to be most appropriate for him to bear. . . .

"By the miraculous power of God, President Taylor escaped the death which the assassins of Carthage jail assigned for him. His blood was then mingled with the blood of the martyred Prophet and Patriarch. He has stood since then as a living martyr for the truth" ("Announcement of the Death of President John Taylor," *Deseret Evening News*, July 26, 1887, 2).

### His Was a Life of Service and Martyrdom

[3.32]

President John Taylor died in exile, in perhaps the darkest hour of the Church's struggle to survive, as a martyr to the principles of loyalty and integrity, as a martyr to freedom of religion, as a martyr to the divinity and witness inherent in his apostolic calling, as a martyr to the restoration of the true Church of Jesus Christ, and as a martyr to the reality of Jesus Himself, whose servant he was.



President John Taylor



# Wilford Woodruff

## Fourth President of the Church

4

### Highlights in the Life of Wilford Woodruff

#### Age Events

- He was born March 1, 1807, in Farmington, Hartford County, Connecticut, to Aphek and Beulah Thompson Woodruff.
- 14 He learned the trade of a miller (1821).
- 26 He was baptized into the Church near Richmond, New York (Dec. 31, 1833).
- 27 He participated in the march of Zion's Camp (May–July 1834).
- 27–29 He served a mission to the southern United States (1834–36).
- 30 He married Phoebe Carter (Apr. 13, 1837).
- 30–31 He served a mission to the eastern United States and the Fox Islands (off the coast of Maine; 1837–38).
- 32 He was ordained an Apostle by Brigham Young (Apr. 26, 1839).
- 32–34 He served a mission to Great Britain (1839–41).
- 36 He served a money-raising mission to the eastern United States (1844).
- 36–39 He presided over the European Mission (1844–46).
- 40 He entered the Salt Lake Valley with Brigham Young (July 24, 1847).
- 41 He presided over the Church in the Eastern States (1848–50).
- 44 He was appointed to the Territorial Legislature (1850).
- 49 He was appointed Church Historian (1856).
- 60 He participated in reestablishing the School of the Prophets (1867).
- 70 He was president of the St. George Temple; he was visited by the spirits of historically prominent people in the St. George Utah Temple (1877).
- 73 He became President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (Oct. 10, 1880).
- 78 He went into exile because of persecution for practicing plural marriage (Feb. 1886).
- 80 He led the Church as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles after John Taylor's death (July 25, 1887).
- 81 He dedicated the Manti Utah Temple (May 17, 1888).
- 82 He became President of the Church (Apr. 7, 1889).
- 83 The Manifesto ending plural marriage (Official Declaration 1) was written (Sept. 24, 1890) and accepted by the Church membership (Oct. 6, 1890).
- 86 He dedicated the Salt Lake Temple (Apr. 6, 1893).
- 87 He organized the Utah Genealogical Society (Nov. 1894).
- 91 He died in San Francisco, California (Sept. 2, 1898).

## He Saw the Scope of the Restored Gospel [4.1]

Wilford Woodruff's life extended through almost all of the 19th century. For most of his life, from his conversion in 1833 until his death in 1898, he participated in advancing the cause of the kingdom of God.

Though few grasped the significance of the little stone cut out of the mountain without hands (see Daniel 2:34–35), the Lord raised up seers who, in some measure, comprehended the purposes of the Almighty—not only for their time but for all times. **Wilford Woodruff** was one of them, and he taught about the importance of this last gospel dispensation:



“This is the only dispensation which God has ever established that was foreordained, before the world was made, not to be overcome by wicked men and devils. . . . The prophet [Enoch] asked the Lord whether there would ever be a time when the earth should rest; and the Lord answered that in the dispensation of the fulness of times the earth

would fill the measure of its days, and then it would rest from wickedness and abominations, for in that day he would establish his kingdom upon it, to be thrown down no more for ever. Then a reign of righteousness would commence and the honest and meek of the earth would be gathered together to serve the Lord, and upon them would rest power to build up the great Zion of God in the latter days. . . .

“This dispensation is one that all the patriarchs and prophets had their eye upon, and the Lord has commenced it, and has carried it on. . . .

“The work that is to be so marvelous in the eyes of men has already commenced, and is assuming shape and proportions; but they cannot see it. It will consist in preaching the gospel to all the world, gathering the Saints from the midst of all those nations who reject it; building up the Zion of God; establishing permanently in the earth his kingdom; preparing for the work of the gathering of the Jews and the events that will follow their settlement in their own lands, and in preparing for ourselves holy places in which to stand when the judgments of God shall overtake the nations. This is truly a good work” (*The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, ed. G. Homer Durham [1946], 109–11).

## He Was Foreordained to His Latter-day Mission [4.2]

In his vision of the spirit world, **President Joseph F. Smith** observed that Wilford Woodruff was one of the noble and great ones chosen in the pre-earth life to lead in this dispensation:

“The Prophet Joseph Smith, and my father, Hyrum Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and other choice spirits who were reserved to come forth in the fulness of times to take part in laying the foundations of the great latter-day work, . . .

“. . . were also among the noble and great ones who were chosen in the beginning to be rulers in the Church of God.

“Even before they were born, they, with many others, received their first lessons in the world of spirits and were prepared to come forth in the due time of the Lord to labor in his vineyard for the salvation of the souls of men” (D&C 138:53, 55–56).

## His Early Years Were Marred by Many Accidents [4.3]

Wilford Woodruff was born March 1, 1807, in Farmington, Connecticut, to Aphek and Beulah Thompson Woodruff. His great-grandfather Josiah Woodruff lived almost 100 years, performing manual labor up to his death. His grandfather Eldad Woodruff had a reputation of being the hardest worker in the county. Wilford learned in his youth the value of work and, with his father, he labored in the Farmington grist mills.

**Wilford Woodruff's** early years were marked by many difficulties and accidents. He was often in peril but, through the grace of God, his life was preserved. He recorded in his journal:

“Evidently, . . . I have been numbered with those who are apparently the marked victims of misfortunes. It has seemed to me at times as though some invisible power were watching my footsteps in search of an opportunity to destroy my life. I, therefore, ascribe my preservation on earth to the watchcare of a merciful Providence, whose hand has been stretched out to rescue me from death when I was in the presence of the most threatening dangers. Some of these dangers from which I so narrowly escaped I shall here briefly describe:

“When three years of age, I fell into a caldron of scalding water and although instantly rescued, I was so badly burned that it was nine months before I was thought to be out of the danger of fatal consequences. My fifth and sixth years were interwoven with many accidents.

On a certain day, in company with my elder brothers, I entered the barn, and chose the top of a haymow for a place of diversion. We had not been there long before I fell from the great beam upon my face on the bare floor. I was severely hurt, but recovered in a short time, and was again at play.

"One Saturday evening, with my brothers Azmon and Thompson, while playing in the chamber of my father's house, contrary to his instructions, I made a misstep and fell to the bottom of the stairs, breaking one of my arms in the fall. So much for disobedience. I suffered intensely, but soon recovered, feeling that whatever I suffered in the future, it would not be for disobedience to parents. The Lord has commanded children to obey their parents; and Paul says, 'This is the first commandment with promise.'

"It was only a short time after this that I narrowly escaped with my life. My father owned a number of horned cattle, among which was a surly bull. One evening I was feeding pumpkins to the cattle, and the bull leaving his own took the pumpkin I had given to a cow which I called mine. I was incensed at the selfishness of this male beast, and promptly picked up the pumpkin he had left, to give it to the cow. No sooner had I got it in my arms than the bull came plunging toward me with great fury. I ran down the hill with all my might, the bull at my heels. My father, seeing the danger I was in, called to me to throw down the pumpkin, but (forgetting to be obedient) I held on, and as the bull was approaching me with the fierceness of a tiger, I made a misstep and fell flat upon the ground. The pumpkin rolled out of my arms, the bull leaped over me, ran his horns into the pumpkin and tore it to pieces. Undoubtedly he would have done the same thing to me if I had not fallen to the ground. This escape, like all others, I attribute to the mercy and goodness of God.

"During the same year, while visiting at my Uncle Eldad Woodruff's, I fell from a porch across some timber, and broke my other arm.

"Not many months passed by before I was called to endure a still greater misfortune. My father owned a sawmill in addition to his flour mill, and one morning, in company with several other boys, I went into the sawmill and got upon the headlock of the carriage to ride, not anticipating any danger; but before I was aware of it my leg was caught between the headlock and the fender post and broken in two. I was taken to the house, and lay nine hours before my bones were replaced. That time was spent in severe pain; but being young, my bones soon knitted together, and in a few weeks I was upon my feet

as usual, attending to the sports of youth. During this confinement my brother Thompson was my companion. He was suffering from typhus fever.

"Shortly after this, upon a dark night, I was kicked in the abdomen by an ox; but being too close to the animal to receive the full force of the blow, I was more frightened than hurt.

"It was not long before I made my first effort at loading hay. I was very young, but thought I had loaded it all right. When on the way to the barn, the wheel of the wagon struck a rock, and off went the hay. I fell to the ground with the load on top of me; this was soon removed, and aside from a little smothering I was unhurt.

"When eight years of age, I accompanied my father, with several others in a one-horse wagon, about three miles from home, to attend to some work. On the way the horse became frightened, ran down a hill, and turned over the wagon, with us in it. We were in danger, but were again saved by the hand of Providence. None of us were injured.

"One day I climbed an elm tree to procure some bark; while about fifteen feet from the ground, the limb upon which I stood, being dry, broke, and I fell to the ground upon my back. The accident apparently knocked the breath out of my body. A cousin ran to the house and told my parents that I was dead, but before my friends reached me I revived, rose to my feet, and met them on the way.

"When twelve years old I was nearly drowned in Farmington River. I sank in thirty feet of water, and was miraculously saved by a young man named Bacon. The restoration to life caused me great suffering.

"At thirteen years of age, while passing through Farmington meadows, in the depths of winter, in a blinding snowstorm, I became so chilled and overcome with cold that I could not travel. I crawled into the hollow of a large apple tree. A man in the distance saw me, and, realizing the danger I was in, hastened to where I was. Before he arrived at the spot I had fallen asleep, and was almost unconscious. He had much difficulty in arousing me to a sense of my critical condition, and promptly had me conveyed to my father's house, where, through a kind Providence, my life was again preserved.

"At fourteen years of age I split my left instep open with an ax which went almost through my foot. I suffered intensely from this injury, and my foot was nine months in getting well.

"When fifteen years old I was bitten in the hand by a mad dog in the last stages of hydrophobia. However, he did not draw blood, and through the mercy and power of God I was again preserved from an awful death.

"At the age of seventeen I met with an accident which caused me much suffering, and came nearly ending my life. I was riding a very ill-tempered horse, which, while going down a very steep, rocky hill, suddenly leaped from the road and ran down the steepest part of the hill, going at full speed amid the thickest of the rocks. At the same time, he commenced kicking, and was about to land me over his head among the rocks, but I lodged on the top of his head, and grabbed each of his ears with my hands, expecting every moment to be dashed to pieces against the rocks. While in this position, sitting astride the horse's neck, with neither bridle nor other means of guiding him except his ears, he plunged down the hill among the rocks with great fury, until he struck a rock nearly breast high, which threw him to the earth. I went over his head, landing squarely upon my feet almost one rod in front of the horse. Alighting upon my feet was probably the means of saving my life; for if I had struck the ground upon any other part of my body, it would probably have killed me instantly. As it was, one of my legs was broken in two places, and both my ankles put out of place in a shocking manner. The horse almost rolled over me in his struggles to get up. My uncle saw me, and came to my assistance. I was carried to his house in an armchair. I lay from 2 o'clock in the afternoon until 10 o'clock at night without medical aid and in great pain, when my father arrived with Dr. Swift, of Farmington. The doctor set my bones, boxed up my limbs, and that night conveyed me eight miles in his carriage to my father's house. I had good attention, and although my sufferings were great, in eight weeks I was out upon my crutches, and was soon restored to a sound condition" (quoted in Matthias F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff, Fourth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: History of His Life and Labors As Recorded in His Daily Journals* [1964], 5–9).

**President Woodruff** told of several other accidents and near accidents, and concluded this part of his journal by writing: "A summary of what is here given may be briefly stated thus: I have broken both legs, one of them in two places; both arms, both ankles, my breastbone, and three ribs; I have been scalded, frozen, and drowned; I have been in two water wheels while turning under a full head; I have passed through a score of other hairbreadth escapes. The repeated deliverances from all these remarkable dangers I ascribe to the mercies of my Heavenly Father. In recalling them to mind I always feel impressed to render the gratitude of my heart, with thanksgiving and joy, to the Lord. I pray that the remainder of my

days may pass in His service, in the building up of His kingdom" (quoted in Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, 11–12).

## He Was a Seeker of Truth [4.4]

**Wilford Woodruff** hungered after righteousness in his youth. He was an avid student of the Bible and desired to know and do the will of the Lord. He wrote: "In my zeal to promote good, I got up prayer meetings in our village and prayed for light and knowledge. It was my desire to receive the ordinances of the gospel, as I could plainly see by reading the Bible that baptism by immersion was a sacred ordinance. In my eagerness, yet being ignorant of the holy priesthood and of the true authority to officiate in the ordinances of eternal life, I requested the Baptist minister to baptize me. At first he refused because I told him I would not join his church as it did not harmonize with the apostolic church which our Savior established. Finally after several conversations, he baptized me on the 5th of May, 1831. He also baptized my brother Asahel. This was the first and only gospel ordinance I sought for until I joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (quoted in Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, 28–29).

"On one occasion, after praying most earnestly to know about the people of the Lord, if any such there were on earth, he [Wilford Woodruff] says: 'The Spirit of the Lord said unto me: "Go to my Word and I will there show thee my will and answer thy prayer." I opened the Bible promiscuously, praying the Lord to direct me to that portion of his Word which would answer my prayer. I opened to the 56th Chapter of Isaiah. I was satisfied it was in response to my prayer. I felt that the salvation of God was about to be revealed and His righteousness come forth. I was also satisfied that I should live to see the people of God gathered. From this time on until the gospel found me I was contented and felt that I should trouble myself no more about the churches and the ministers'" (Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, 29).

## Robert Mason Told Him of a Vision He Had [4.5]

One who had significant influence on Wilford Woodruff even before Wilford heard about the Restoration was Robert Mason, a godly man who yearned for the full gospel of Jesus Christ. The Lord had mercy upon him, and through a vision he was enlightened concerning that which would soon be accomplished on the earth.

**Wilford Woodruff** wrote the following about the vision:

"Father Mason did not claim that he had any authority to officiate in the ordinances of the gospel, nor did he believe that such authority existed on the earth. He did



believe, however, that it was the privilege of any man who had faith in God to fast and pray for the healing of the sick by the laying on of hands. He believed it his right and the right of every honest-hearted man or woman to receive light and knowledge, visions, and revelations by the prayer of faith. He told me that the day was near when the Lord would establish His Church and Kingdom upon the earth with all its ancient gifts and blessings. He said that such a work would commence upon the earth before he died, but that he would not live to partake of its blessings. He said that I should live to do so, and that I should become a conspicuous actor in that kingdom.

“The last time I ever saw him he related to me the following vision which he had in his field in open day: ‘I was carried away in a vision and found myself in the midst of a vast orchard of fruit trees. I became hungry and wandered through this vast orchard searching for fruit to eat, but I found none. While I stood in amazement finding no fruit in the midst of so many trees, they began to fall to the ground as if torn up by a whirlwind. They continued to fall until there was not a tree standing in the whole orchard. I immediately saw thereafter shoots springing up from the roots and forming themselves into young and beautiful trees. These budded, blossomed, and brought forth fruit which ripened and was the most beautiful to look upon of anything my eyes had ever beheld. I stretched forth my hand and plucked some of the fruit. I gazed upon it with delight; but when I was about to eat of it, the vision closed and I did not taste the fruit.’

“‘At the close of the vision I bowed down in humble prayer and asked the Lord to show me the meaning of the vision. Then the voice of the Lord came to me saying: ‘Son of man, thou hast sought me diligently to know the truth concerning my Church and Kingdom among men. This is to show you that my Church is not organized among men in the generation to which you belong; but in the days of your children the Church and Kingdom of God shall be made manifest with all the gifts and the

blessings enjoyed by the Saints in past ages. You shall live to be made acquainted with it, but shall not partake of its blessings before you depart this life. You will be blest of the Lord after death because you have followed the dictation of my Spirit in this life.’”

“When Father Mason had finished relating the vision and its interpretation, he said, calling me by my Christian name: ‘Wilford, I shall never partake of this fruit in the flesh, but you will and you will become a conspicuous actor in the new kingdom.’ He then turned and left me. These were the last words he ever spoke to me upon the earth. To me this was a very striking circumstance. I had passed many days during a period of twenty years with this old Father Mason. He had never mentioned this vision to me before. On this occasion he said he felt impelled by the Spirit of the Lord to relate it to me.

“The vision was given to him about the year 1800. He related it to me in 1830, the spring in which the Church was organized. Three years later when I was baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, almost the first person I thought of was this prophet, Robert Mason. Upon my arrival in Missouri with Zion’s Camp, I wrote him a long letter in which I informed him that I had found the true gospel with all its blessings; that the authority of the Church of Christ had been restored to the earth as he had told me it would be; that I had received the ordinances of baptism and the laying on of hands; that I knew for myself that God had established through Joseph Smith, the Prophet, the Church of Christ upon the earth.

“He received my letter with great joy and had it read over to him many times. He handled it as he had handled the fruit in the vision. He was very aged and soon died without having the privilege of receiving the ordinances of the gospel at the hands of an elder of the Church.

“The first opportunity I had after the truth of baptism for the dead was revealed, I went forth and was baptized for him in the temple font at Nauvoo” (quoted in Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, 16–18).

## He Understood the Purpose of Life [4.6]

A great part of **Wilford Woodruff’s** wisdom was his perception of the real purpose of his life. He wrote:

“I was twenty-three years of age; and in reflecting upon the past, I became sincerely convinced that there was no real peace of mind or true happiness except in the service of God and in doing those things which would meet His approval. As far as my imagination would enable me, I brought before my mind all the honor, glory, and happiness of the whole world. I thought of the gold and the wealth of the rich, of the glory, grandeur, and power

of kings, presidents, princes, and rulers. I thought of the military renown of Alexander, Napoleon, and other great generals. I cast my mind over the innumerable paths through which the giddy world travels in search of pleasure and happiness. In summing up the whole matter in the vision of my mind, I had to exclaim with Solomon: ‘All is vanity of vanities sayeth the preacher.’

“I could see that within a few years all would end alike in the grave. I was convinced that no man could enjoy true happiness and obtain that which would feed the immortal soul, except God was his friend and Jesus Christ his advocate. I was convinced that man became their friend by doing the will of the Father, and by keeping His commandments. I made a firm resolution that from then I would seek the Lord to know His will, to keep His commandments, and to follow the dictates of His Holy Spirit. Upon this ground I was determined to stand and to spend my future life in the maintenance of these convictions” (quoted in Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, 26–27).



### He Recognized Truth and Was Baptized [4.7]

When he heard the witness of two Mormon missionaries on December 29, 1833, **Wilford Woodruff** quickly recognized the truth and was baptized just two days later. From that point on, there was no turning back. He wrote: “I felt that I could truly exclaim with the prophet of God, ‘I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.’ The fulness of the everlasting gospel had come at last. It filled my heart with great joy. It laid the foundation of a greater and more glorious work than I ever expected to see in this life. I pray God in the name of Jesus Christ to guide my future life, that I may live to His honor and glory, and be a blessing to my fellowmen, and in the end be saved in His celestial kingdom, even so, Amen” (quoted in Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, 36).

### He Participated in Zion’s Camp [4.8]

In 1833, the Lord called upon the faithful priesthood holders of His church to travel from Kirtland, Ohio, to Missouri to redeem and restore the land of Zion (see D&C 101; 103). The Prophet Joseph Smith led the group, and Wilford Woodruff was among the approximately 200 who went. When they left, Wilford was 27 and had been a member of the Church less than six months.

While marching with the Prophet Joseph Smith in Zion’s Camp, Wilford was further honed and sharpened—prepared for greater service in the cause of the Master.

In Salt Lake City 36 years later, **President Wilford Woodruff** recounted: “When the members of Zion’s Camp were called, many of us had never beheld each others’ faces; we were strangers to each other and many had never seen the prophet. We had been scattered abroad, like corn sifted in a sieve, throughout the nation. We were young men, and were called upon in that early day to go up and redeem Zion, and what we had to do we had to do by faith. We assembled together from the various states at Kirtland and went up to redeem Zion, in fulfilment of the commandment of God unto us. God accepted our works as He did the works of Abraham. We accomplished a great deal, though apostates and unbelievers many times asked the question, ‘What have you done?’ We gained an experience that we never could have gained in any other way. We had the privilege of beholding the face of the prophet, and we had the privilege of traveling a thousand miles with him, and seeing the workings of the Spirit of God with him, and the revelations of Jesus Christ unto him and the fulfilment of those revelations. And he gathered some two hundred elders from throughout the nation in that early day and sent us broadcast into the world to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Had I not gone up with Zion’s Camp I should not have been here today, and I presume that would have been the case with many others in this Territory” (*The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, sel. G. Homer Durham [1946], 305).

### He Was a Missionary and Experienced the Ministering of Angels [4.9]

By mid 1834, **Wilford Woodruff’s** desire to be a missionary had become so intense that in many prayers he pleaded with the Lord for that privilege. He served his first mission in the southern United States. Without purse or scrip and walking as far as 60 miles in a single day, the young missionary went forth. He later testified that he had the ministration of angels on his mission and that he was never more blessed than as a priest in the Aaronic Priesthood fulfilling an honorable mission:

"I had the administration of angels while holding the office of a priest. I had visions and revelations. I traveled thousands of miles. I baptized men, though I could not confirm them because I had not the authority to do it.

"I speak of these things to show that a man should not be ashamed of any portion of the priesthood. Our young men, if they are deacons, should labor to fulfil that office. If they do that, they may then be called to the office of a teacher, whose duty it is to teach the people, visit the Saints and see that there is no evil or iniquity carried on. God has no respect for persons in this priesthood any further than as they magnify their callings and do their duty" (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, 298).

## He Married Phoebe Carter [4.10]

Wilford Woodruff met Phoebe Carter in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1837. They knew each other for about two and a half months and decided to marry. They were married at the residence of the Prophet Joseph Smith on April 13, 1837. The ceremony was performed by President Frederick G. Williams, who was a counselor in the First Presidency, because the Prophet had to flee his enemies at the time. The newly married couple began their life together at the Prophet's home, and they would remain together for 48 years, until Phoebe's death on November 19, 1885.



Phoebe Carter Woodruff, about 1840



A brooch Wilford Woodruff gave to his wife Phoebe, containing a picture of him at age 45

## He Taught His Family the Gospel [4.11]

Many members of Wilford's family had been skeptical of or not interested in the teachings of the Church. **Wilford Woodruff** wrote of an experience he had during a visit with them:

"On the 1st of July, 1838, there occurred one of the most interesting events of my whole life in the ministry. When Father Joseph Smith gave me my patriarchal blessing,

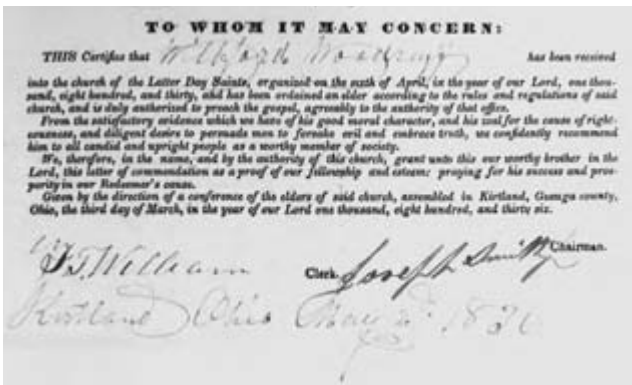
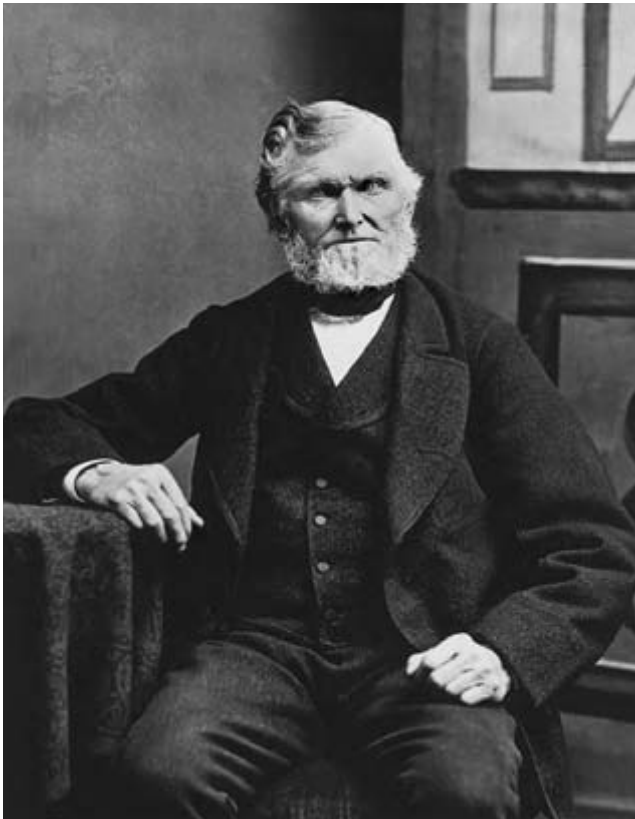
among the many wonderful things he promised me was that I should bring my father's household into the Kingdom of God; and I felt that if I ever obtained that blessing, the time therefor had come. By the help of God I preached the gospel faithfully to my father's household and to all who were with him, as well as to my other relatives, and I appointed a meeting at my father's home on Sunday, the 1st of July. My father was believing my testimony, as were all in his household; but upon this occasion it appeared as if the devil were determined to hinder the fulfillment of the promise of the patriarch to me. . . . Distress overwhelmed the whole household, and all were tempted to reject the work; and it seemed as if the same power would devour me. I had to take to my bed for an hour before the time of meeting. There I prayed to the Lord with my whole soul for deliverance; for I knew then that the power of the devil was exercised to hinder me from accomplishing what God had promised I should do. The Lord heard my prayer and answered my petition. When the hour of meeting came, I arose from my bed and could sing and shout for joy to think I had been delivered from the power of the evil one. Filled with the power of God, I stood in the midst of the congregation and preached unto the people in great plainness the gospel of Jesus Christ.

"At the close of the meeting we assembled on the banks of the Farmington River, 'because there was much water there,' and I led six of my friends into the river and baptized them for the remission of their sins. All of my father's household were included in this number, as the patriarch had promised. . . . It was truly a day of joy to my soul. I had baptized my father, stepmother, and sister, and I afterwards added a number of other relatives. I felt that the work of this day alone amply repaid me for all my labors in the ministry" (Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, 91–92).

## He Was Called to the Apostleship [4.12]

Wilford Woodruff was ordained an Apostle by Brigham Young on April 26, 1839. Soon thereafter, Elder Woodruff began a momentous mission to England. Like Paul of old, being led by the Spirit, he brought thousands of souls unto Christ. **President Heber J. Grant** later said of him, "I believe that no other man who ever walked the face of the earth was a greater converter of souls to the Gospel of Jesus Christ" (in Conference Report, Jun. 1919, 8).

During the next few years, after returning from his mission, Elder Woodruff became a member of the Nauvoo City Council (1841), worked on the Nauvoo Temple (1842), and labored as business manager for the *Times and Seasons*.



Certificate of ordination when Wilford Woodruff was ordained an elder

## The Keys of the Kingdom Were Given [4.13]

Wilford Woodruff was present when the Prophet Joseph Smith conferred all of the keys of the kingdom of God upon the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. After the death of the Prophet, **Elder Woodruff** saw the mantle of leadership fall upon a transfigured Brigham Young. He had a personal witness that the keys of the kingdom in their fulness were held by the senior member of the Quorum of the Twelve. In 1889, he taught:

“When the Lord gave the keys of the kingdom of God, the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood, of the apostleship, and sealed them upon the head of Joseph Smith, he sealed them upon his head to stay here upon the earth until the coming of the Son of Man. Well might Brigham Young say, ‘The keys of the kingdom of God are here.’ They were with him to the day of his death. They then rested upon the head of another man—President John Taylor. He held those keys to the hour of his death. They then fell by turn, or in the providence of God, upon Wilford Woodruff.

“I say to the Latter-day Saints, the keys of the kingdom of God are here, and they are going to stay here, too, until the coming of the Son of Man. Let all Israel understand that. They may not rest upon my head but a short time, but they will then rest on the head of another apostle, and another after him, and so continue until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the clouds of heaven to ‘reward every man according to the deeds done in the body’ (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, 73).

**President Woodruff** also said: “The God of heaven has put into our hands the gospel, the priesthood, the keys of His kingdom, and the power to redeem the earth from the dominion of sin and wickedness under which it has groaned for centuries, and under which it groans today. Let us lay these things to heart, and try to live our religion; so that when we get through we may look back on our lives, and feel that we have done what was required of us, individually and collectively. The Lord requires much at our hands, more than He has ever required of any generation that has preceded us; for no generation that has ever lived on the earth was called upon to establish the kingdom of God on the earth, knowing that it should be thrown down no more for ever” (“Remarks,” *Deseret News Weekly*, Jan. 11, 1871, 575).

## He Served a Mission to England [4.14]

In 1880, **Elder Wilford Woodruff** talked about the great success he was led to during his missionary service in England:

“How many times have we been called by revelation to go to the right and left, here, there, and the other place, contrary to our expectation?

“I will here relate what took place in my own experience. I was in Staffordshire in the year 1840. I was in the town of Stanley and held a meeting in the City Hall. I had a week’s appointments out in that town. Before I rose to speak to the people, the Spirit of the Lord said to me, ‘This is the last meeting you will hold with this people



Thousands of people joined the Church through Wilford Woodruff's missionary labors. Elder Woodruff preached in the Gadfield Elm Chapel. The Benbows owned the property and turned it over to the Church when they emigrated to the United States. It became the first chapel owned by the Church in England.

for many days.' I told the congregation when I arose what the Spirit of the Lord had manifested to me. They were as much surprised as I was. I did not know what the Lord wanted, but I saw the purpose of God afterwards. The Spirit of the Lord said to me, 'Go south.' I traveled eighty miles; went into the south of England. As soon as I arrived, I met John Benbow. It was clearly made manifest to me why I had been called thither. I had left a good field, where I was baptizing every night in the week. When I got to this place, I found a people—some 600 of them—who had . . . formed themselves into a sect called the United Brethren. I found that they were praying for light and truth and that they had gone about as far as they could go. I saw that the Lord had sent me to them. I went to work amongst them and ultimately baptized their superintendent, forty preachers and some 600 members. . . . Altogether some 1800 were baptized in that field of labor. . . . I name these things to show how we have to be governed and led by the revelations of God day by day. Without this we can do nothing" (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, 60).

## He Chronicled Events [4.15]

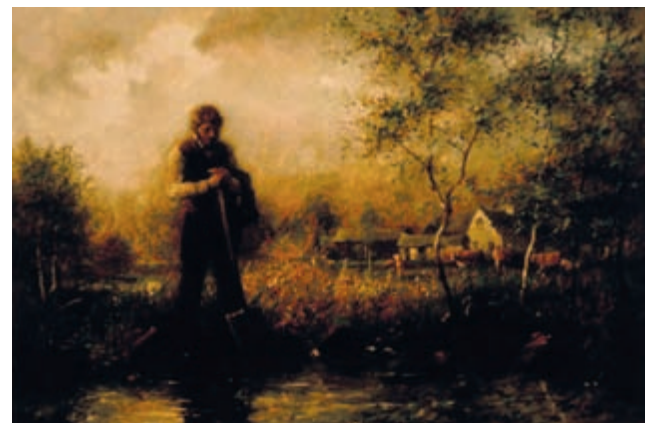
Wilford Woodruff followed counsel of the Prophet Joseph Smith by faithfully keeping a journal. In the archives of the Church Historian's Office there are some 7,000 pages of the journals of Wilford Woodruff. The record he kept was invaluable for himself, for his family, and now for the whole Church. Later in his life, in 1856, Elder Woodruff began his career as a Church historian, but from the beginning of his life in the Church, he felt that he had a

special stewardship to record the important happenings, speeches, places, people, and events of the Restoration. His extensive journals are the basis of much of what we know about the early Church history.

On January 20, 1872, **Elder Woodruff** recorded the following in his journal, concerning what he had taught in a meeting in the School of the Prophets:

"There is one subject I wish to speak upon and that is the keeping of a journal with respect to the dealings of God with us. I have many times thought the Quorum of the Twelve and others considered me rather enthusiastic upon this subject; but when the Prophet Joseph organized the Quorum of the Twelve, he counseled them to keep a history of their lives, and gave his reasons why they should do so. I have had this spirit and calling upon me since I first entered this Church. I made a record from the first sermon I heard, and from that day until now I have kept a daily journal. Whenever I heard Joseph Smith preach, teach, or prophesy, I always felt it my duty to write it; I felt uneasy and could not eat, drink, or sleep until I did write; and my mind has been so exercised upon this subject that when I heard Joseph Smith teach and had no pencil or paper, I would go home and sit down and write the whole sermon, almost word for word and sentence by sentence as it was delivered, and when I had written it it was taken from me, I remembered it no more. This was the gift of God to me.

"The devil has sought to take away my life from the day I was born until now, more so even than the lives of other men. I seem to be a marked victim of the adversary. I can find but one reason for this: the devil knew if I got into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I would write the history of that Church and leave on record the works and teachings of the prophets, of the apostles and elders" (quoted in Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, 476–77).



Wilford Woodruff preparing for baptisms at pond on John Benbow's farm

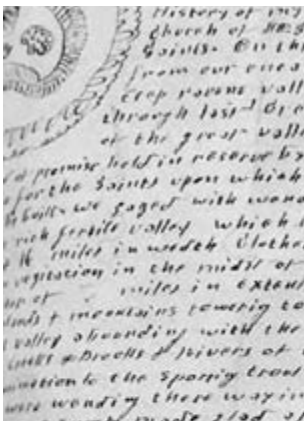


Wilford Woodruff's writings include 19 journal volumes with more than 7,000 pages over 62 years.

### He Testified about Journal Writing and Warned Future Historians [4.16]

In his September 6, 1856, journal entry, **Wilford Woodruff** wrote: "We are not apt to think of the importance of events as they transpire with us, but we feel the importance of them afterwards. We are living in one of the most important generations that man ever lived on earth, and we should write an account of those important transactions which are taking place before our eyes in fulfillment of the prophecies and the revelation of God. There is a great flood of revelations fulfilling in our day, and as they are transpiring before our eyes we want a record made of them" (*Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 4:444; punctuation, capitalization, and spelling standardized).

On March 17, 1857, **Wilford Woodruff** wrote: "I have never spent any of my time more profitably for the benefit of mankind than in my journal writing. . . . Some of the most glorious gospel sermons, truths, and revelations that were given from God to this people through the mouth of the Prophets Joseph, Brigham, Heber, and the Twelve could not be found upon the earth on record, only in my journals, and they are compiled in the Church history and transmitted to the Saints of God in all future generations. Does not this pay me for my trouble? It does" (*Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 5:37; punctuation, capitalization, and spelling standardized).



Close-up of a page from Wilford Woodruff's journal

In his journal entry for July 5, 1877, **Wilford Woodruff** testified: "God has inspired me to keep a journal and history of this Church, and I warn the future historians to give credence to my history of this Church and kingdom, for my testimony is true, and the truth of its record will be manifest in the world to come" (*Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 7:359; punctuation, capitalization, and spelling standardized).

### He Had a Great Love for Temple Work [4.17]

To Wilford Woodruff, one of the most precious principles of the gospel was the work for the dead. He became the first president of the St. George Utah Temple. Later, he was instrumental in organizing the Genealogical Society of Utah, which facilitated the work of salvation for those beyond the veil. In 1877, **Elder Woodruff** spoke about the importance of temples and temple work:

"It is our duty to rise up and build these Temples. I look upon this portion of our ministry as a mission of as much importance as preaching to the living; the dead will hear the voice of the servants of God in the spirit-world, and they cannot come forth in the morning of the resurrection, unless certain ordinances are performed, for and in their behalf, in Temples built to the name of God. It takes just as much to save a dead man as a living man. . . .

"I will here say, before closing, that two weeks before I left St. George, the spirits of the dead gathered around me, wanting to know why we did not redeem them. Said they, 'You have had the use of the Endowment House for a number of years, and yet nothing has ever been done for us. We laid the foundation of the government you now enjoy, and we never apostatized from it, but we remained true to it and were faithful to God.' These were



The St. George Utah Temple, 1876, where temple work was done for the Founding Fathers of the United States and other early leaders



*That We May Be Redeemed, the Founding Fathers and Wilford Woodruff*

the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and they waited on me for two days and two nights. I thought it very singular, that notwithstanding so much work had been done, and yet nothing had been done for them. The thought never entered my heart, from the fact, I suppose, that heretofore our minds were reaching after our more immediate friends and relatives. I straightway went into the baptismal font and called upon Bro. McCallister to baptize me for the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and fifty other eminent men, making one hundred in all, including John Wesley, Columbus, and others; I then baptized him for every President of the United States, except three; and when their cause is just, somebody will do the work for them" ("Discourse," *Deseret News Weekly*, Mar. 27, 1878, 114–15).

Since then, the temple work of those three presidents has been completed.



The Manti Utah Temple was privately dedicated on May 17, 1888. Elder Lorenzo Snow offered the dedicatory prayer, which had been prepared by President Wilford Woodruff.

## Satan Strove to Halt the Work of the Lord [4.18]

After a short 10 years of peace in the West (1847–57), the Church again faced persecution. Church leaders knew that once people colonized the West, Church members would once again face many of the persecutions and

challenges they had previously faced when they were driven from Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois. The wicked could not leave the Church alone.

In a letter written to President John Taylor and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, dated September 15, 1879, **Elder Wilford Woodruff** stated: "The devil is making a hard struggle to stop the building of temples, and the work of God, and the wicked are helping him, but, brethren, God reigns and will stand by you to the end" (quoted in Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, 528).

## 1884 Was a Year of Crisis [4.19]

By 1884, the Federal government of the United States mobilized its forces not only to confront the popular issue of polygamy, but to threaten the very lives of the Latter-day Saint people and the existence of the Church as an institution. The temper of the times is, in part, reflected by the following exchange between a Latter-day Saint newspaper editor, John Nicholson, and a federal judge when Brother Nicholson appeared in court for sentencing.

In his statement, Brother Nicholson said: "My purpose is fixed and, I hope, unalterable. It is, that I shall stand by my allegiance to God, fidelity to my family, and what I conceive to be my duty to the Constitution of the country, which guarantees the fullest religious liberty to the citizen." The judge, in his reply, said, "If you do not submit to it of course you must take the consequences; but the will of the American people is expressed, . . . and this law will go on and grind you and your institution to powder" (*Deseret News* [Weekly], Oct. 21, 1885, 1).

## He Was Called to Be President of the Church [4.20]

**Wilford Woodruff** presided over the Church as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles from the time of President John Taylor's death on July 25, 1887, until he was sustained as President of the Church on April 7, 1889. In general conference on that day he said: "This 7th day of April, 1889, is one of the most important days in my life, for I was made President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by the unanimous vote of ten thousand of them. The vote was first taken by quorums and then by the entire congregation as in the case of President John Taylor. This is the highest office ever conferred upon any man in the flesh. It came to me in the eighty-third year of my life. I pray God to protect me and give me power to magnify my calling to the end of my days. The Lord has watched over me until the present time" (quoted in Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, 564–65).



The First Presidency, April 1889: George Q. Cannon, Wilford Woodruff, and Joseph F. Smith

## The President Is to Have Power and Fellowship with God [4.21]

Concerning his responsibilities as President of the Church, **President Wilford Woodruff** taught: “It is my duty to have fellowship with God, as weak an instrument as I am in the hands of God. It is my duty to have power with God. And when I have this, then my counselors should stand by me and with me. We should be of one heart and mind in all matters, temporal and spiritual, that come before us in the labor of the Church and kingdom of God. And I am thankful to say that this has been the case since I have been called to this position, or since the organization of the Presidency of the Church” (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, 89).

## He Presided during a Time of Grave Crisis [4.22]

It was a time of grave crisis for the Church when President Wilford Woodruff began his administration as President of the Church. President John Taylor had died in exile, and most of the prominent Church leaders were in prison or were unable to lead effectively because of persecutions. Federal laws not only made it unlawful to

practice plural marriage but also prohibited those who did so from voting or running for public office. Utah’s admission as a state seemed hopelessly deadlocked. There was legislation that sought to disenfranchise all members of the Church. The Church, as an institution, was disincorporated, tithing funds were seized, and Temple Square and other Church properties were transferred to the United States government. There was a serious attempt by many to actually destroy the entity of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Missionary work for the living and temple work for the dead were greatly threatened.

## The Nation Turns Against the Saints [4.23]

In his journal, **President Wilford Woodruff** summarized 1889 by writing: “Thus ends the year 1889, and the word of the Prophet Joseph Smith is beginning to be fulfilled that the whole nation would turn against Zion and make war upon the Saints. The nation has never been filled so full of lies against the Saints as today. 1890 will be an important year with the Latter-day Saints and [the] American nation” (*Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 9:74; punctuation, capitalization, and spelling standardized).

## The Manifesto Was Received by Revelation [4.24]

The Manifesto on plural marriage (see Official Declaration 1) made clear the Lord’s will concerning the discontinuance of the practice of plural marriage. After years of sacrifice and abiding the Lord’s commandment on plural marriage, the Saints’ faith in living prophets would be tested.

“These were precarious years (1880s) for President Woodruff, other Church leaders, and the members of the Church in general. Many arrests had taken place



Wilford and Emma Smith Woodruff

**IS ENDORSED.**

**The People Accept the Manifesto!**

**THE VOTE UNANIMOUS**

**President Cannon Gives the Reasons For Its Issuance.**

**PRESIDENT WOODRUFF SPEAKS.**

He is Thankful the Saints Have Sustained Him in His Action in Issuing It.

Sunday saw a big increase in the attendance at the tabernacle, and the demand for admission was so great that had there been ten times the usual room, it would have all been filled. The one big feature of the conference of course was the presentation of

at the head of the church would ever be permitted to lead the people astray. God would so punish him. Were he (the speaker) to attempt to direct the people wrong, he would be removed. President Woodruff said he had but a few years to live on the earth, and he would not knowingly do anything that would deprive him of the privilege of meeting in the hereafter the good men who had gone before.

The first speaker on Sunday morning was President George Q. Cannon.

We are living in peculiar times. The work of God was being assailed in various directions. However, this was no new thing. It had been the lot of the Saints from the beginning to contend with difficulties and overcome obstacles. They had had to pass through scenes which had tested their faith, integrity and fidelity. The elders who had been faithful in preaching the gospel, had not neglected to tell the people whom they baptized the character of the difficulties which they would have to encounter when they espoused the cause of God. They were warned to expect the same fate which attended the ancient disciples of Jesus Christ. Now their names would be cast out as evil.

Many things in this church had come in contact with the traditions and preconceived ideas of men. There were many things to-day which perhaps conflicted with the previous views of Latter-day Saints. There was scarcely a thinking man or woman in the church of Christ who had not indulged in reflections concerning the future of this work, and some of those views had been raised up by subsequent events. God was the author of this work, and he would adjust it to suit his purposes and not those of men.

Let them think of how many doctrines had been taught that were new to the world which God had revealed in our day. How would they react to these unless the spirit of God bore testimony to them? Who on the earth believed them? They were not sanctioned by tradition; they were not upheld by the common belief of men. They were new to this generation. And yet, though they shook the prejudices of mankind and perhaps startled the Latter-day Saints, when they sought of God for a test many concerning them, he never failed to give unto them His Holy Spirit which gave them assurance that they were of God and not of men. And so it will be to the end. The people of this church are to walk just as the Father walks; they have to depend upon the revelations of God as they come to them. They had been

Newspaper coverage of the Manifesto in the *Salt Lake Herald*, October 7, 1890

for the practice of plural marriage. The Church was losing property through unfair taxation and confiscation. President Woodruff humbly approached the Lord asking for help. For weeks President Woodruff wrestled mightily with the Lord. The Lord gave him a vision showing him the consequences of the continued practice of plural marriage and instructed President Woodruff in what he should do. On September 24, 1890, he issued what is now called The Manifesto which announced the end of the practice of plural marriage” (Brian Smith, “Wilford Woodruff: ‘Wilford the Faithful’ Became God’s Anointed,” *Church News*, May 1, 1993, 10).

On November 1, 1891, in an address at a stake conference in Logan, Utah, **President Woodruff** taught:

“‘And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be Scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation’ [D&C 68:4].

“It is by that power that we have led Israel. By that power President Young presided over and led the Church. By the same power President John Taylor presided over and led the Church. And that is the way I have acted, according to the best of my ability, in that capacity. I do not want the Latter-day Saints to understand that the Lord is not

with us, and that He is not giving revelations to us; for He is giving us revelation, and will give us revelation until this scene is wound up.

“I have had some revelations of late, and very important ones to me, and I will tell you what the Lord has said to me. Let me bring your minds to what is termed the manifesto. The Lord has told me by revelation that there are many members of the Church throughout Zion who are sorely tried in their hearts because of that manifesto. . . .

“The Lord showed me by vision and revelation exactly what would take place if we did not stop this practice. . . . All [temple] ordinances would be stopped throughout the land of Zion. Confusion would reign throughout Israel, and many men would be made prisoners. This trouble would have come upon the whole Church, and we should have been compelled to stop the practice. Now, the question is, whether it should be stopped in this manner, or in the way the Lord has manifested to us, and leave our prophets and apostles and fathers free men, and the temples in the hands of the people, so that the dead may be redeemed. . . .

“ . . . I saw exactly what would come to pass if there was not something done. I have had this spirit upon me for a long time. But I want to say this: I should have let all the temples go out of our hands; I should have gone to prison myself, and let every other man go there, had not the God of heaven commanded me to do what I did do; and when the hour came that I was commanded to do that, it was all clear to me. I went before the Lord, and I wrote what the Lord told me to write. I laid it before my brethren—such strong men as Brother [George] Q. Cannon, Brother [Joseph] F. Smith, and the Twelve Apostles. I might as well undertake to turn an army with banners out of its course as to turn them out of a course that they considered to be right. These men agreed with me, and ten thousand Latter-day Saints also agreed

with me. Why? Because they were moved upon by the Spirit of God and by the revelations of Jesus Christ to do it” (“Remarks Made by President Wilford Woodruff,” *Deseret Evening News*, Nov. 7, 1891, 4; see also Official Declaration 1, Excerpts from Three Addresses by President Wilford Woodruff Regarding the Manifesto).



## God Is at the Helm [4.25]

The Lord's purposes will be fulfilled, and we can have confidence that each prophet who presides over the Lord's people has been empowered to pursue a steady course. **President Wilford Woodruff** declared: "I say to all Israel at this day, I say to the whole world, that the God of Israel, who organized this Church and kingdom, never ordained any President or Presidency to lead it astray. Hear it, ye Israel, no man who has ever breathed the breath of life can hold these keys of the kingdom of God and lead the people astray" (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, 74).

## He Taught about Revelation [4.26]

**President Wilford Woodruff** taught the following about revelation:

"What is revelation? The testimony of the Father and Son. How many of you have had revelation? How many of you have had the Spirit of God whisper unto you—the still small voice? I would have been in the spirit world a great many years ago if I had not followed the promptings of the still small voice. These were the revelations of Jesus Christ, the strongest testimony a man or a woman can have. I have had many testimonies since I have been connected with this Church and kingdom. I have been blessed at times with certain gifts and graces, certain revelations and ministrations; but with them all I have never found anything that I could place more dependency upon than the still small voice of the Holy Ghost" (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, 45).

"It is this preknowledge which God has given concerning his work . . . which is one of the chief causes of the strength possessed by the Latter-day Saints. It is the principle of revelation from the head of the church to the church itself—a principle which in its operation is not confined to one man, or to three men, or to twelve men; but is extended to every individual in the Church, in greater or less degree, as each one chooses to avail himself of it. There is an appointed way, however, in which revelation from the Lord for the government of his church is received. There is but one man on the earth, at a time, who holds this power. But every individual member has the privilege of receiving revelation from the Lord for his guidance in his own affairs" (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, 54).

"The Lord would not permit me to occupy this position one day of my life, unless I was susceptible to the Holy Spirit and to the revelations of God. It is too late in the day for this Church to stand without revelation" (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, 57).



Photograph of the capstone laying ceremony of the Salt Lake Temple, April 6, 1892, with 50,000 people in attendance



Ticket of invitation to the Salt Lake Temple dedication

## He Had a Vision of God's Purposes [4.27]

In his journal entry for January 26, 1880, **Wilford Woodruff** wrote: "I went to bed filled with prayer and meditation. I fell asleep and slept until about midnight. I awoke. The Lord poured out His spirit upon me and opened the vision of my mind so I could comprehend in a good measure the mind and will of God and His purposes concerning our nation and the inhabitants of Zion. And when the vision of my mind was open to comprehend the situation of our nation, their wickedness, abominations, and corruptions and the judgments of God and the destruction that awaited them, and when I comprehended the great and mighty responsibility which rested upon the Quorum of the Apostles in the sight of God and the heavenly hosts, my head became a fountain of tears and my pillow was wet as with the dews of heaven. And sleep departed from me, and the Lord revealed unto me our duty, even the duty of the Twelve Apostles and all the faithful elders of Israel" (*Wilford*

*Woodruff's Journal*, 7:546; punctuation, capitalization, and spelling standardized).

Elder Woodruff, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, made a copy of the revelation he received and submitted it to the Presidency of the Church.

## The Genealogical Society Was Organized [4.28]

President Wilford Woodruff was always very concerned with the work for the dead. In 1894 the Genealogical Society of Utah was organized under his direction. In that same year, **President Woodruff** announced important matters that the Lord had revealed relating to family sealings:

"We want the Latter-day Saints from this time to trace their genealogies as far as they can, and to be sealed to their fathers and mothers. Have children sealed to their parents, and run this chain through as far as you can get it. . . . This is the will of the Lord to this people, and I think when you come to reflect upon it you will find it to be true. . . .

". . . The fathers of this people will embrace the gospel. It is my duty to honor my father who begot me in the flesh. It is your duty to do the same. When you do this, the Spirit of God will be with you. And we shall continue this work, the Lord adding light to that which we have already received. . . . There are men in this congregation who wish to be adopted [sealed] to me. I say to them today, if they can hear me, Go and be adopted [sealed] to your fathers, and save your fathers, and stand at the head of your father's house, as saviors upon Mount Zion, and God will bless you in this. This is what I want to say, and what I want carried out in our temples. . . . I have had a great anxiety over this matter. I have had a great desire that I might live to deliver these principles to the Latter-day Saints, for they are true. They are one step forward in the work of the ministry and in the work of the endowments in these temples of our God. . . . I have gone to work with the assistance of my friends and redeemed my father's and my mother's house. When I inquired of the Lord how I could redeem my dead, while I was in St. George, not having any of my family there, the Lord told me to call upon the Saints in St. George and let them officiate for me in that temple, and it should be acceptable unto him. . . . This is a revelation to us. We can help one another in these matters" (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, 157–59).

## The Law of the Fast Was Clarified [4.29]

In 1896, under the direction of President Wilford Woodruff, the practice of having "fast day" on the first Thursday of the month was changed to the present observance of the first Sunday of the month. Along with this change, the **First Presidency** reiterated eternal principles: "In some places the custom has arisen to consider it a fast to omit eating breakfast. This is not in accordance with the views and practice of the past. When fasts were observed in the early days, it was the rule to not partake of food from the previous day until after the meeting in the afternoon of the fast day. In making donations to the poor also it has been the understanding that the food that would be necessary for the two meals should be donated to the poor, and as much more as those who are liberally inclined and have the means may feel disposed to give" ("An Address," *The Deseret Weekly*, Nov. 14, 1896, 678).

## Zion Moves Steadily Onward [4.30]

**President Wilford Woodruff** taught:

"So many things have occurred which are entirely different to preconceived notions as to the course that would be taken in building up Zion that each one needs to have a knowledge that God is leading us in the path which we are now pursuing. To some who are inclined to despond and to take a gloomy view of affairs, the ship Zion may, perhaps, appear to be drifting away from its old moorings because things are being done or movements consented to which, to their eyes, portend disaster to us and to the work of God.



"There has always been a few among us who have been filled with evil forebodings, and who have failed to see the wisdom of God in the steps which his people have been led to take. They have questioned and found fault with the counsel that has been given and the measures which have been adopted and have asserted that revelation had ceased and the Saints were no longer guided by men to whom God made known his will. . . . Experience has proved that in all such cases those who make these accusations are themselves in the dark.

"But the faithful people—those who have lived strictly in accordance with their profession as Saints and with the requirements of the gospel—have not been assailed by doubts of this character. There might be many things which they could not fully understand, the reasons for which might not be fully apparent to them at the time; but possessing the Spirit of God, and being led by it, they trusted in the Lord and felt satisfied to leave the management of his kingdom and its affairs to his supreme wisdom. Time developed to their minds the correctness of the course which the Church had been led to adopt. This has occurred so frequently in our career that the instances will readily suggest themselves to those familiar with our history. In this way, however, the faith of the people has been constantly tested" (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, 141–42).

### We Must Labor to Get the Spirit [4.31]

Note the following from **President Wilford Woodruff**:

"Joseph Smith visited me a great deal after his death, and taught me many important principles. . . . Among other things, he told me to get the Spirit of God; that all of us needed it. . . .

"Brigham Young also visited me after his death. . . . And he told me what Joseph Smith had taught him in Winter Quarters, to teach the people to get the Spirit of God. He said, 'I want you to teach the people to get the Spirit of God. You cannot build up the Kingdom of God without that.'

"That is what I want to say to the brethren and sisters here today. Every man and woman in this Church should labor to get that Spirit. We are surrounded by these evil spirits that are at war against God and against everything looking to the building up of the kingdom of God; and we need this Holy Spirit to enable us to overcome these influences. I have had the Holy Ghost in my travels. Every man has that has gone out into the vineyard and labored

faithfully for the cause of God. I have referred to the administration of angels to myself. What did these angels do? One of them taught me some things relating to the signs that should precede the coming of the Son of Man. Others came and saved my life. What then? They turned and left me. But how is it with the Holy Ghost? The Holy Ghost does not leave

me if I do my duty. It does not leave any man who does his duty. We have known this all the way through. Joseph Smith told Brother John Taylor on one occasion to labor to get the Spirit of God, and to follow its dictation, and it would become a principle of revelation within him. God has blessed me with that, and everything I have done since I have been in this Church has been done upon that principle. The Spirit of God has told me what to do, and I have had to follow that" ("Discourse," *The Deseret Weekly*, Nov. 7, 1896, 642–43).



One of the gifts given to President Woodruff on his 90th birthday was this fine bedspread made with Utah silk.

### Members Honored Him with a Birthday Tribute [4.32]

"One of the most important events of President Woodruff's long life was the celebration of his ninetieth birthday on March 1, 1897. On that occasion thousands of Latter-day Saints gathered in the Salt Lake Tabernacle to do him honor. Appropriate remarks were made by his counselors and others of the General Authorities. A silver mounted cane was presented to him by temple workers. The vast congregation sang 'We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet.' On returning to his home President Woodruff recorded his impressions of the day in his journal. 'The scene completely overpowered me. The events of my childhood and early manhood came to my mind. I remembered vividly how I prayed to the Lord that I might live to see a Prophet or an Apostle who would teach me the gospel of Christ. Here I stood in the great Tabernacle filled with ten thousand children, with Prophets, Apostles and Saints. My head was a fountain of tears. Still I addressed the mighty congregation'" (Preston Nibley, *The Presidents of the Church* [1974], 132–33).



A cane, hat, and scarf used by President Woodruff during the last years of his life

## He Was a Man of Prophetic Vision [4.33]

**President Wilford Woodruff** had a clear vision of life and was faithful to it. He once said: “What will it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Not much. What will a man give in exchange for his soul, when he gets on the other side of the veil? I marvel very much at the little interest manifested by the inhabitants of the earth generally in their future state. There is not a person here today but what is going to live on the other side of the veil as long as his Creator—to the endless ages of eternity, and the eternal destiny of every individual depends upon the manner in which the few short years of the life in the flesh are spent. I ask, in the name of the Lord, what is popularity to you or me? What is gold or silver, or this world’s goods to any of us, any further than to enable us to obtain what we need to eat, drink, and wear, and to build up the kingdom of God. And for us to stop praying, and to become crazy after the riches of the world, is the very height of foolishness and folly. To see the way that some people act, you might suppose that they are going to live here eternally, and that their eternal destiny depends upon the number of dollars they have. I sometimes ask the Latter-day Saints, how much we had when we came here? How much did we bring, and where did it come from? I do not think any one of us brought a wife or a brick house; I do not think that any of us were born on horseback or in a carriage, or that we brought railroad scrip and cattle and houses with us, but we were born naked as Job, and I think that we shall leave here as naked as he did” (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, 243–44).

## He Was Known as “Wilford the Faithful” [4.34]

When President Wilford Woodruff’s great heart ceased to beat on September 2, 1898, the Saints of God had reason to mourn, for a noble life had left their midst. It was a noble life because it had been consecrated to further the cause of Zion. In his journal years earlier, **President Woodruff** had written: “Be it known that I, Wilford Woodruff, do freely covenant with my God, that I freely consecrate and dedicate myself, together with all my properties and effects, unto the Lord, for the purpose of assisting in the building up of His Kingdom and His Zion upon the earth, that I may keep His law. I lay all before the Bishop of His Church, that I may be a lawful heir to the celestial Kingdom of God” (quoted in Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, 45).

Wilford Woodruff was a man who in his early youth dreamed of some day seeing an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he lived to walk himself in the way of the prophets and even finally to preside among the Saints. It was President Woodruff’s wish that he remain faithful in all things to the end of his life. He was known by many as “Wilford the Faithful”; in an early revelation the Lord called him “my servant” (D&C 118:6). What a great epitaph for any son of God.



President Wilford Woodruff, August 1898



# Lorenzo Snow

## Fifth President of the Church

5

### Highlights in the Life of Lorenzo Snow

Age	Events
	He was born April 3, 1814, in Mantua, Portage County, Ohio, to Oliver and Rosetta Leonora Pettibone Snow.
22	He began attending Hebrew School in Kirtland (spring, 1836); he was baptized into the Church in Kirtland, Ohio (June 19, 1836).
23	He served a mission to Ohio (spring, 1837).
24–25	He served a mission to southern Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky, and Ohio (1838–39).
26–29	He served a mission to England (1840–43).
31	He married Charlotte Merrill Squires, Mary Adaline Goddard, Sarah Prichard, and Harriet Amelia Squires (1845).
34	He was ordained an Apostle (Feb. 12, 1849).
35	He helped organize the Perpetual Emigrating Fund (Oct. 1849).
35–38	He served a mission in Italy; he arranged for and supervised the translation of the Book of Mormon into Italian (Oct. 1849–July 1852).
38	He was elected to the Utah Legislature (1852); he served for 29 years.
39	He presided over the colonization of Brigham City, Utah (1853).
49–50	He served a special mission to Hawaii; he nearly drowned (1864).
58–68	He was president of the Utah Territorial Legislative Council (1872–82); he assisted in the second dedication of Palestine for the return of the Jews (1872–73).
59–63	He served as a counselor to President Brigham Young (Apr. 1873–Aug. 1877).
59	He began the United Order in Brigham City (1873–80).
71	He served a mission to Indians in northwestern United States (1885).
72–73	He was imprisoned 11 months for practicing plural marriage (1886–87).
74	He offered the dedicatory prayer at the Manti Utah Temple (May 21, 1888).
75	He became President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (Apr. 7, 1889).
76	The Manifesto ending plural marriage (Official Declaration 1) was issued (1890).
79	He became president of the Salt Lake Temple (1893).
84	He was visited by the Savior in the Salt Lake Temple (1898); he became President of the Church (Sept. 13, 1898).
85	He promoted tithing, beginning in southern Utah (May 1899).
87	He died in Salt Lake City, Utah (Oct. 10, 1901).

## He Developed Enduring Traits [5.1]

Lorenzo Snow was a farm boy, raised on the frontier of 19th century America, in Ohio. His daily tasks included felling trees, clearing fields, and overseeing the farm in his father's frequent absence. He was the oldest son in a large family and did not know what it meant to be idle. His family developed bonds of love and trust and mutual help that were set to endure.

## His Early Life Included Lessons in Responsibility [5.2]

Oliver and Rosetta Snow were natives of New England. After the birth of two daughters, they moved from New England to Ohio, where they had five other children—two more girls and three boys. Lorenzo was their fifth child and the oldest boy. His parents established themselves as farmers in Portage County, Ohio. They were soon joined by relatives and former friends from New England. As the years passed, the Snow family became prosperous and influential.



Birthplace of Lorenzo Snow, Mantua, Ohio

Lorenzo Snow's parents and relatives and many of the other townspeople were educated people. They encouraged their children in the pursuit of intellectual honor, culture, and social accomplishment. Lorenzo received this same encouragement and struggled determinedly to satisfy the expectations of his family and neighbors.

Lorenzo's father was frequently away from home on private and public business. On many occasions Lorenzo was left in charge when he was only a child. The responsibilities of a large and prosperous farm seemed no serious obstacle to him. In carrying these early burdens, he was punctual, resolute, and energetic. As he grew older he superintended the shipment of farm produce downriver to New Orleans. Though such excursions required months of work, he was ever responsible and equal to the task.

## He Was Taught to Be Sympathetic, Broad-Minded, and Tolerant [5.3]

In her biography of her brother, Lorenzo Snow's older sister Eliza wrote: "In their religious faith our parents were by profession Baptists, but not of the rigid, iron-bedstead order; their house was a resort for the good and intelligent of all denominations, and their hospitality was proverbial" (Eliza R.

Snow Smith, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow* [1975], 2).

Discussions at home were never allowed to become bigoted or narrow, and Lorenzo, along with his brothers and sisters, were encouraged to form broad acquaintance with people and their views. His frequent shipping excursions to New Orleans gave him much practical opportunity to observe a variety of situations and people.



Engraving of Lorenzo Snow by Frederick Piercy

## He Enjoyed Reading [5.4]

Books were Lorenzo Snow's constant companions. When his attention was not demanded by the responsibilities of the farm, he would take a book and go off where he would not be disturbed. He read widely and became acquainted with history, geography, and literature, both classic and contemporary.

## He Wanted to Join the Military [5.5]

It was perhaps due partly to his interest in history that Lorenzo Snow became interested in joining the military. Shortly after his 21st birthday, he completed his secondary studies and had won a lieutenant's commission by appointment from the governor of Ohio. But, feeling that a college education would brighten his military prospects, he temporarily laid his military training aside, sold his share of his father's estate, and moved to Oberlin, Ohio. There the Presbyterians had established a widely acclaimed college just a few years before.

## His Mother and Two Sisters Were Converted [5.6]

**Lorenzo Snow** studied a year at Oberlin College. Although by nature he had a tender regard for people, he had never been particularly attracted to institutionalized religion. He wrote to his sister Eliza near the end of his term, "If there is nothing better than is to be found here in Oberlin College, good bye to all religions" (Smith, *Biography and Family Record*, 5).

His mother and a sister were the first members of Lorenzo Snow's family to join The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Later, his sister Eliza joined. Lorenzo



Eliza R. Snow

had deep respect for Eliza's opinions and judgment, and he wrote to her at Kirtland, Ohio, and asked many questions about the newly revealed religion. She responded to his questions and requested that he come to Kirtland and study with Professor Seixas, who had been engaged to teach Hebrew by the leaders of the Church. In the spring of 1836, Lorenzo left Oberlin and moved to Kirtland.

## He Was Open and Receptive to the Church [5.7]

Lorenzo Snow was anxious to meet the Prophet Joseph Smith. Not long after he arrived in Kirtland, Ohio, he was talking with his sister Eliza on the street when "Joseph passed by, seemingly in a big hurry. He paused just long enough to be introduced to Lorenzo and to say to Eliza: 'Eliza, bring your brother over to the house to dinner.' She was then boarding at the home of the Prophet and teaching his private school. Lorenzo watched the stranger as far as he could see him, and then remarked to his sister: 'Joseph Smith is a most remarkable man. I want to get better acquainted with him. Perhaps, after all, there is something more to Joseph Smith and to Mormonism than I have ever dreamed'" (Thomas C. Romney, *The Life of Lorenzo Snow* [1955], 23).

Like his father, Lorenzo never approached religion in a narrow, dogmatic way. He regarded Mormonism as a healing solace to the injured. He studied the religion



Where the Snows attended Church

cautiously, listened to the Prophet Joseph Smith's public discourses, and conversed with him privately. He befriended the Prophet's father, who said to him, "You will soon be convinced of the truth of the latter-day work, and be baptized, and you will become as great as you can possibly wish—even as great as God, and you cannot wish to be greater" (quoted in LeRoi C. Snow, "Devotion to a Divine Inspiration," *Improvement Era*, June 1919, 654).

## He Observed the Members Carefully Before He Accepted Baptism [5.8]

Lorenzo Snow observed the members of the Church and was astonished at the testimonies of the elders because they were so plain and positive about heavenly things. He was astonished at the divine power that was manifest through the administrations of Patriarch Joseph Smith Sr. "Being present at a 'Blessing Meeting,' in the [Kirtland] Temple, previous to his baptism into the Church; after listening to several patriarchal blessings pronounced upon the heads of different individuals with whose history he was acquainted, and of whom he knew the Patriarch was entirely ignorant; he was struck with astonishment to hear the peculiarities of those persons positively and plainly referred to in their blessings. And, as he afterwards expressed, he was convinced that an influence, superior to human prescience, dictated the words of the one who officiated" (Smith, *Biography and Family Record*, 9).

## He Studied, Was Baptized, and Received a Witness of the Truth of the Restoration

[5.9]

**Lorenzo Snow** studied and diligently compared the claims of Mormonism with ancient Christianity. He recorded the following in his journal:



Early photograph of Lorenzo Snow

“Previous to accepting the ordinance of baptism, in my investigations of the principles taught by the Latter-day Saints, which I proved, by comparison, to be the same as those mentioned in the New Testament taught by Christ and His Apostles, I was thoroughly convinced that obedience to those principles would impart miraculous powers, manifestations and revelations. With sanguine expectation of this result, I

received baptism and the ordinance of laying on of hands by one who professed to have divine authority; and, having thus yielded obedience to these ordinances, I was in constant expectation of the fulfilment of the promise of the reception of the Holy Ghost.

“The manifestation did not immediately follow my baptism, as I had expected, but, although the time was deferred, when I did receive it, its realization was more perfect, tangible and miraculous than even my strongest hopes had led me to anticipate.

“Some two or three weeks after I was baptized, one day while engaged in my studies, I began to reflect upon the fact that I had not obtained a *knowledge* of the truth of the work—that I had not realized the fulfilment of the promise ‘he that doeth my will shall know of the doctrine,’ and I began to feel very uneasy. I laid aside my books, left the house, and wandered around through the fields under the oppressive influence of a gloomy, disconsolate spirit, while an indescribable cloud of darkness seemed to envelop me. I had been accustomed, at the close of the day, to retire for secret prayer, to a grove a short distance from my lodgings, but at this time I felt no inclination to do so. The spirit of prayer had departed and the heavens seemed like brass over my head. At length, realizing that the usual time had come for secret prayer, I

concluded I would not forego my evening service, and, as a matter of formality, knelt as I was in the habit of doing, and in my accustomed retired place, but not feeling as I was wont to feel.

“I had no sooner opened my lips in an effort to pray, than I heard a sound, just above my head, like the rustling of silken robes, and immediately the Spirit of God descended upon me, completely enveloping my whole person, filling me, from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet, and O, the joy and happiness I felt! No language can describe the almost instantaneous transition from a dense cloud of mental and spiritual darkness into a refulgence of light and knowledge, as it was at that time imparted to my understanding. I then received a perfect knowledge that God lives, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and of the restoration of the holy Priesthood, and the fulness of the Gospel. It was a complete baptism—a tangible immersion in the heavenly principle or element, the Holy Ghost; and even more real and physical in its effects upon every part of my system than the immersion by water; dispelling forever, so long as reason and memory last, all possibility of doubt or fear in relation to the fact handed down to us historically, that the ‘Babe of Bethlehem’ is truly the Son of God; also the fact that He is now being revealed to the children of men, and communicating knowledge, the same as in the Apostolic times. I was perfectly satisfied, as well I might be, for my expectations were more than realized, I think I may safely say in an infinite degree.

“I cannot tell how long I remained in the full flow of the blissful enjoyment and divine enlightenment, but it was several minutes before the celestial element which filled and surrounded me began gradually to withdraw. On arising from my kneeling posture, with my heart swelling with gratitude to God, beyond the power of expression, I felt—I *knew* that He had conferred on me what only an omnipotent being can confer—that which is of greater value than all the wealth and honors worlds can bestow. That night, as I retired to rest, the same wonderful manifestations were repeated, and continued to be for several successive nights. The sweet remembrance of those glorious experiences, from that time to the present, bring them fresh before me, imparting an inspiring influence which pervades my whole being, and I trust will to the close of my earthly existence” (quoted in Smith, *Biography and Family Record*, 7–9).

He prayed, he pondered, he believed, and he was baptized. His life was changed as he embraced the gospel with all his heart.

## He Wanted to Serve God [5.10]

Throughout the fall of 1836 young **Lorenzo Snow** saw the elders returning from their missions and wanted to serve a mission himself. He said:



The Chagrin River, where Lorenzo Snow was baptized

“The testimonies of young missionaries as they rehearsed their experiences as laborers in the vineyard, proclaiming the joyful news that God was again speaking to His children on the earth; that He had raised up a Prophet through whom He was communicating His will, and calling on all the inhabitants of the earth to ‘repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,’ stirred within me an irresistible desire to join in the glorious enterprise.

“About this time a proclamation of the First Presidency was given from the stand, inviting those who wished to become members of the Elders’ Quorum to present their names, and if accounted worthy by the Presidency, they should be ordained. With many others, I submitted my name for approval or otherwise, which is the only time in my life that I have offered my name for or solicited an office or calling” (quoted in Smith, *Biography and Family Record*, 14).

Within a few weeks of his ordination, Lorenzo started on the first of many missions that he would serve. He preached to his father’s family in Ohio, and later he preached in Missouri, Illinois, and Kentucky. He also taught the gospel in England, Italy, France, and Switzerland. Like Wilford Woodruff and John Taylor, Lorenzo Snow brought thousands into the Church and bore witness before queens and princes.

**Lorenzo** wrote the following, describing his feelings as he left to serve his first mission:

“Early in the spring of 1837, I shouldered my valise and started out like the ancient missionaries, ‘without purse or scrip,’ on foot and alone, to proclaim the restoration of the fulness of the Gospel of the Son of God, and to bear witness of what I had seen and heard, and of the knowledge I had received by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

“It was, however, a severe trial to my natural feelings of independence to go without purse or scrip—especially the purse; for, from the time I was old enough to work, the feeling that I ‘paid my way’ always seemed a necessary adjunct to self respect, and nothing but a positive knowledge that God required it now, as He did anciently of His servants, the Disciples of Jesus, could induce me to go forth dependent on my fellow creatures for the common necessities of life. But my duty in this respect was clearly made known to me, and I determined to do it” (quoted in Smith, *Biography and Family Record*, 15).

## He Faced His First Congregation in Ohio [5.11]

**Lorenzo Snow** preached his first sermon in Medina County, Ohio, the neighborhood of his father’s family. He described that experience in his journal: “The people were notified and a respectable congregation assembled. It was a sore trial to face that audience in the capacity of a preacher, but I believed and felt an assurance that a Spirit of inspiration would prompt and give me utterance. I had sought by prayer and fasting—I had humbled myself before the Lord, calling on Him in mighty prayer to impart the power and inspiration of the holy Priesthood; and when I stood before that congregation, although I knew not one word I could say, as soon as I opened my mouth to speak, the Holy Ghost rested mightily upon me, filling my mind with light and communicating ideas and proper language by which to impart them. The people were astonished and requested another meeting” (quoted in Smith, *Biography and Family Record*, 16).

As a result of those meetings, Lorenzo baptized and confirmed into the Church his uncle, aunt, and several

of his cousins. One of those cousins, Adaline, later became his wife. While on this mission, he traveled in various parts of the state of Ohio and baptized many persons who remained faithful to the truth. He recorded that he was greatly blessed in performing his labors (see Smith, *Biography and Family Record*, 16, 19).



## He Preached in Missouri, Illinois, and Kentucky [5.12]

Feeling the insistent desire to teach the gospel, in October 1838 Lorenzo Snow again left his home and, with Elder Abel Butterfield, departed for southern Missouri. They later decided to separate so that Elder Butterfield could labor in northern Illinois and Indiana while Elder Snow served in southern Illinois and Kentucky. Though there was very little interest in his message in Illinois, his time in Kentucky was met with varied success and treatment. He returned from his labors almost six months after he started. Sometimes he had been received with courtesy and listened to with interest, while other times he had suffered abuse and insults.

## He Served a Mission to the British Isles [5.13]

In the spring of 1840, Elder Lorenzo Snow was called to serve a mission in Great Britain, where he spent almost three years. There were many members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles also serving in the British Isles, including Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Wilford Woodruff, and John Taylor. During his mission, Elder Snow experienced great opposition. Yet, despite the difficulties, the missionary work progressed and the Church grew. During his time in Britain, Elder Snow presided over the London Branch and saw it more than double in membership. He also served as counselor to Thomas Ward, president of the British Mission. In addition, Elder Snow presented two specially bound copies of the Book of Mormon to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

## He Married [5.14]

Returning from his first mission to Britain, Lorenzo Snow arrived in the growing new city of Nauvoo, Illinois. Soon after his arrival, he learned about the doctrine of plural marriage from the Prophet Joseph Smith. Almost two years later, after the Prophet's martyrdom and as the work on the Nauvoo temple neared completion, Lorenzo illustrated his acceptance of the doctrine of plural marriage.



Lorenzo Snow married Mary Adaline Goddard in the Nauvoo Temple during the fall of 1845.

"He was acutely aware that a principal ordinance to be performed in the temple was the sealing of husbands to wives in an eternal union. Given his total commitment to the Church and its doctrines, the counsel he had received from the Prophet Joseph Smith about polygamy, and his advancing age, we may be sure that as the temple neared completion Lorenzo became increasingly conscious of the need to marry. The depth of his feelings may be gauged by the fact that in 1845, at age thirty-one, he was sealed to four women in the Nauvoo temple: Mary Adaline Goddard (his cousin, who had three sons by a former marriage, Hyrum, Orville, and Jacob); Charlotte Squires; Sarah Ann Prichard; and Harriet Amelia Squires" (Francis M. Gibbons, *Lorenzo Snow: Spiritual Giant, Prophet of God* [1982], 48).



Lorenzo Snow's home on Brigham Street in Salt Lake City

## A Call Came to Serve in Italy [5.15]

In October 1849, Lorenzo Snow was called to serve a mission in Italy. This mission also included preaching and teaching in other European countries, including England, France, and Switzerland. He served until July 1852. In a letter to his sister Eliza, **Elder Snow** wrote of his experiences during the winter of 1849 while traveling with his companions across the American plains to the east coast, where they would depart for their mission. In his letter, he wrote:

"One day, as we were taking our noon-tide meal, and our horses were quietly grazing on the prairies, the following scene occurred: A startling shout resounded through our little camp—*To arms! To arms! The Indians are upon us!* We looked and beheld a spectacle, grand, imposing and fearful. Two hundred warriors upon their furious steeds, painted, armed and clothed with all the horrors of war, rushing towards us like a mighty torrent. In a moment we placed ourselves in an attitude of defence. But could we expect with thirty men to withstand this powerful host? Onward came the savage band with accelerated speed,

as a mighty rock, loosed from the mountain's brow, rushes impetuously downward, sweeping, overturning, and burying everything in its course. We saw it was their intention to crush us beneath the feet of their foaming chargers. Now they were within a few paces, and in another moment we should be overwhelmed, when, lo! an alarm like an electric shock struck through their ranks and stayed their career, as an avalanche, sweeping down the mountain side, stops in the midst of its course by the power of a hand unseen—the Lord had said, *Touch not mine anointed and do my prophets no harm!*

"Many incidents occurred which often called forth the remark, that in our past experience, the hand of the Lord had never been more visibly manifested. When we arrived on the banks of the great Missouri, her waters immediately congealed for the first time during the season, thus forming a bridge over which we passed to the other side: this was no sooner accomplished than the torrent ran as before" (quoted in "The Apostle Lorenzo Snow," *Tullidge's Quarterly Magazine*, Jan. 1883, 381).

## He Faced Opposition in Italy [5.16]

Italy was the fountainhead of Catholicism and the people there opposed any missionary activity of other churches. Laws against proselyting were extant throughout the nation and imposed the strictest penalties. Lorenzo Snow fully expected persecution and had seriously contemplated the thought that his life might be in danger.



Lorenzo Snow

In Rome, on June 27, 1851, he observed a feast day honoring Saint Peter. In a letter written to President Brigham Young, Elder Snow commented on the irony of the circumstances of that celebration. The ancient Romans had crucified Peter. Then, centuries later, a huge church was built in Rome as a monument to his name. Yet, they rejected and persecuted living Apostles in their midst. **Elder**

**Snow** pondered what the ultimate outcome of such

an attitude would mean for him and wrote to President Young: "The fathers beheaded John and crucified Peter: this week we have witnessed feastings and rejoicings in honor of their names. Pleasing reflections—*starvation!—bonds! imprisonment!—and martyrdom!* and subsequent

generations paying us divine honors" (quoted in *Tullidge's Quarterly Magazine*, Jan. 1883, 384).

As difficult as the mission was, it laid the cornerstone for future Church growth in Italy. During the nearly three-year span of Elder Snow's Italian mission, he formally organized the Church in the valleys of Italy's Piedmont region, arranged for and supervised the translation and publication of the Book of Mormon and several missionary tracts into the Italian language, directed missionary work in Switzerland, sent missionaries to begin laboring in India, and instructed numerous congregations of Saints in Britain, France, and Switzerland through the written and spoken word.

## He Established a Successful Cooperative

[5.17]

In October 1853, President Brigham Young called Elder Lorenzo Snow, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, to move his family to Brigham City, Utah, and preside over the Saints there. Several years later, Elder Snow established a financial cooperative based on principles of the United Order, with the purpose of uniting the people both spiritually and temporally.

"His first step in the co-operative movement was in the mercantile line. In 1863–64 he commenced by establishing a co-operative store, with stock in shares of \$5.00, thus making it possible for people of very moderate circumstances to become shareholders.

"Many difficulties occurred in the start, and the progress was slow, but it steadily gained in the confidence of the people, the stockholders realizing from twenty to twenty-five per cent per annum in merchandise, and in five years it was an acknowledged success. Then, aided by the profits from the mercantile department, an extensive tannery was erected at a cost of \$10,000, the people having the privilege of putting in labor as capital; and soon after these departments were in successful operation, a woolen factory, at a cost of nearly forty thousand dollars, was brought into working order, again taking labor as stock.

"A co-operative sheep-herd, for supplying the factory, was soon added—then co-operative farms, and to these a cheese dairy. Thus one department of industry after another was established, until between thirty and forty departments were combined—all working harmoniously like the wheels of a grand piece of machinery" (Eliza R. Snow, quoted in "The Twelve Apostles," *Historical Record*, Feb. 1887, 142–43).



Elder Snow led 50 families to Box Elder County, Utah, where he laid out a new city that is now called Brigham City. Elder Snow had two homes there.

Many who knew him attributed his success at Brigham City to his spiritual nature. It was later written that his “spirituality was highly developed. It was the predominating trait of his character. All other traits were simply adjuncts and accessories clustering around this one great dictator, obedience to its will and assisting to accomplish its aim. For years he preached about and labored in the affairs of this world, but things temporal were only the means to things spiritual. The financier was at all times subservient to the Apostle” (Leslie Woodruff Snow, “President Lorenzo Snow,” *Young Woman’s Journal*, Sept. 1903, 392).

### His Life Was Preserved in Hawaii [5.18]

In November 1860 President Brigham Young called Walter Murray Gibson, a new convert, to serve a mission in Japan. On his way to Japan, in the summer of 1861, Gibson arrived in Hawaii and decided to stay there. Because the missionaries had been called home during the Utah War, Gibson was able to take over the leadership of the Church in Hawaii. He convinced many Hawaiian members to turn their property over to him and bow in his presence. He also sold the rights to various Church offices to naive members and wore robes while conducting church services with great pomp and ceremony. His plan was to take over the islands and become king.

The First Presidency learned of the situation in Hawaii and sent Ezra T. Benson and Lorenzo Snow, who were members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and former Hawaiian missionaries William W. Cluff, Alma Smith, and Joseph F. Smith to discipline Walter Gibson

and address the related problems. While attempting to go ashore in turbulent water, they left their steamer and boarded a small boat. Joseph F. Smith stayed behind, saying that the waters were too dangerous, which proved to be correct.

As they crossed the offshore reef, huge waves capsized their boat. All the men were safely rescued except for Lorenzo, whose unconscious body was found in the water and partially under the overturned boat. His companions brought him to shore and worked to revive him for nearly an hour. William Cluff explained how Elder Snow was finally revived:

“We did not only what was customary in such cases, but also what the spirit seemed to whisper to us.

“After working over him for some time, without any indication of returning life, the by-standers said that nothing more could be done for him. But we did not feel like giving him up, and still prayed and worked over him, with an assurance that the Lord would hear and answer our prayers.

“Finally we were impressed to place our mouth over his and make an effort to inflate his lungs, alternately blowing in and drawing out the air, imitating, as far as possible, the natural process of breathing. . . . After a little, we perceived very faint indications of returning life. . . . These grew more and more distinct, until consciousness was fully restored” (quoted in Romney, *Life of Lorenzo Snow*, 203–4).

After an investigation and several meetings with the members, Walter Gibson was excommunicated and the Church and mission leadership in Hawaii was placed under the direction of Joseph F. Smith. Elder Snow returned home with Elder Benson.



The Council House, where the territorial legislature met



Mount of Olives, near Jerusalem. In 1872, President Brigham Young called his First Counselor, George Albert Smith, to go to the Holy Land and dedicate the land to the Lord. Lorenzo Snow and his sister Eliza were among the seven traveling companions who went with President Smith.

## He Was a Dedicated Apostle and Defender of the Faith [5.19]

The Morrill Bill of 1862, the Edmunds Act of 1882, and the Edmunds Tucker Bill of 1887 were enforced during three decades prior to the issuing of the Manifesto in 1890. During that time major properties of the Church were confiscated.

In 1886, Elder Lorenzo Snow was charged and convicted of violating the Edmunds law. Appeal of the plural marriage cases beyond territorial courts to the United States Supreme Court could not be scheduled unless the defendant was incarcerated. Elder Snow was taken to prison, as were scores of his brethren. He served a term of 11 months, during which time he organized a school.

Patient in bonds, **Lorenzo Snow** was like the Apostle Paul. Years before, he had testified:

“We are here that we may be educated in a school of suffering and fiery trials, which school was necessary for Jesus our elder brother, who, the scriptures tell us, was made perfect through suffering. It is necessary we suffer in all things, that we may be qualified and worthy to rule and govern all things, even as our Father in heaven and his eldest son Jesus. . . .



Lorenzo Snow

“And now, where is the man among you having once burst the veil and gazed upon this purity, the glory, the might, majesty, and dominion of a perfected man, in celestial glory, in eternity, will not cheerfully resign life, suffer the most excruciating tortures, let limb be torn from limb sooner than dishonor or resign his Priesthood?” (“Address to the Saints of Great Britain,” *Millennial Star*, Dec. 1, 1851, 363).

## He Brought a Young Woman Back to Life [5.20]

Soon after Lorenzo Snow was baptized, he received a blessing from Patriarch Joseph Smith Sr. Among other blessings, Lorenzo was promised that “if expedient the dead shall rise and come forth at thy bidding” (quoted in Romney, *Life of Lorenzo Snow*, 406). This promised blessing was literally fulfilled many years later when President Snow, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, blessed his niece Ella Jensen, of Brigham City, Utah, and called her spirit back from the spirit world after she had been dead for three hours. Ella Jensen wrote the following about her experience:

“On the 1st of March, 1891, I was taken severely ill with the scarlet fever, and suffered very much for a week. It was on the morning of the 9th that I awoke with a feeling that I was going to die. As soon as I opened my eyes I could see some of my relatives from the other world. . . . I then asked my sister to assist me in getting ready to go into the spirit world. She combed my hair, washed me, and I brushed my teeth and cleaned my nails that I might be clean when going before my Maker. . . . I then bade my dear ones good by, and my spirit left my body.

“For some time I could hear my parents and relatives weeping and mourning, which troubled me greatly. As soon, however, as I had a glimpse of the other world my attention was drawn away from them to my relatives there, who all seemed pleased to see me. . . . I saw so many of my departed friends and relatives, all of whom I have mentioned many times afterwards, and with many of them I conversed. . . . After having stayed with my departed friends what seemed to me but a very short time, yet it lasted several hours, I heard Apostle Lorenzo Snow administer to me, telling me that I must come back, as I had some work to do on the earth yet. I was loath to leave the heavenly place, but told my friends that I must leave them. . . . For a long time afterwards I had a great desire to go back to the place of heavenly rest, where I dwelt so short a time” (quoted in “Remarkable Experience,” *Young Woman’s Journal*, Jan. 1893, 165).

## The Savior Appeared to Him in the Salt Lake Temple [5.21]

"For some time President Woodruff's health had been failing. Nearly every evening President Lorenzo Snow visited him at his home. This particular evening the doctors said that President Woodruff could not live much longer, that he was becoming weaker every day. President Snow was greatly worried. We cannot realize today what a terrible financial condition the Church was in at that time—owing millions of dollars and not being able to pay even the interest on its indebtedness.

"My father went to his room in the Salt Lake Temple, dressed in his robes of the Priesthood, knelt at the sacred altar in the Holy of Holies in the House of the Lord and there plead to the Lord to spare President Woodruff's life, that President Woodruff might outlive him and that the great responsibility of Church leadership would not fall upon his shoulders. Yet he promised the Lord that he would devotedly perform any duty required at his hands. . . .

". . . [On September 2, 1898, after receiving word of the death of Wilford Woodruff, President Snow] went to his private room in the Salt Lake Temple.

"President Snow put on his holy temple robes, repaired again to the same sacred altar, offered up the signs of the Priesthood and poured out his heart to the Lord. He reminded the Lord how he plead for President Woodruff's life to be spared, that President Woodruff's days would be lengthened beyond his own; that he might never be called upon to bear the heavy burdens and responsibilities of the Church. 'Nevertheless,' he said, 'Thy will be done. I have not sought this responsibility but if it be Thy will, I now present myself before Thee for Thy guidance and instruction. I ask that Thou show me what Thou wouldst have me do.'

"After finishing his prayer he expected a reply, some special manifestation from the Lord. So he waited,—and waited—and waited. There was no reply, no voice, no visitation, no manifestation. He left the altar and the room in great disappointment. Passing through the Celestial room and out into the large corridor a glorious manifestation was given President Snow which I relate in the words of his grand-daughter, Allie Young Pond. . . .

"'One evening while I was visiting grandpa Snow in his room in the Salt Lake Temple, I remained until the door keepers had gone and the night-watchmen had not yet come in, so grand-pa said he would take me to the main front entrance and let me out that way. He got his bunch of keys from his dresser. After we left his room and while we were still in the large corridor leading into the celestial

room, I was walking several steps ahead of grand-pa when he stopped me and said: "Wait a moment, Allie, I want to tell you something. It was right here that the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to me at the time of the death of President Woodruff. He instructed me to go right ahead and reorganize the First Presidency of the Church at once and not wait as had been done after the death of the previous presidents, and that I was to succeed President Woodruff."

"Then grand-pa came a step nearer and held out his left hand and said: "He stood right here, about three feet above the floor. It looked as though He stood on a plate of solid gold."

"Grand-pa told me what a glorious personage the Savior is and described His hands, feet, countenance and beautiful white robes, all of which were of such a glory of whiteness and brightness that he could hardly gaze upon Him.

"Then he came another step nearer and put his right hand on my head and said: "Now, grand-daughter, I want you to remember that this is the testimony of your grand-father, that he told you with his own lips that he actually saw the Savior, here in the Temple, and talked with Him face to face"" (LeRoi C. Snow, "An Experience of My Father's," *Improvement Era*, Sept. 1933, 677).



Alice Armada Snow Young Pond (1876–43), heard her grand-father, President Lorenzo Snow, share his experience of the Lord's visit in the Salt Lake Temple.

## He Was Called to Be President of the Church [5.22]

Lorenzo Snow served for nine years as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and at the age of 84 years became President of the Church. Some people expressed fear that a man of his age would not be capable of standing up under the strains and challenges of the presidency. He was not a large man physically. He was slight of build and appeared deceptively frail and weak, weighing about 125 pounds. But he quickly dispelled such fears. He was erect, strong, active, and full of inspiration until the time of his last illness at the age of 87. His clarity of mind was demonstrated again and again as he spoke to the Saints, directed the Church, and moved the kingdom of God forward toward its destiny. His

youngest daughter, born when he was 82, recalled that he was accustomed to carrying her up the stairs on his back until the last year of his life. More importantly, however, the Lord was not concerned about President Snow's advanced age, for it was He who called this 84-year-old spiritual giant to be His prophet.

## He Received Revelation that Helped Solve the Church's Financial Crisis [5.23]

President Lorenzo Snow struggled mightily to wrest the Church from the financial difficulties caused by the decades of persecution. Because the federal government had seized so much property from the Church, it seemed to many members that to pay tithing and other offerings was simply to give their means away to be used by the enemies of the Church. The Saints were not wealthy, and many of them decided that they would not pay tithing. The resources of the Church were extremely strained.

In early May of 1899, the Lord revealed to President Snow that he and others of the leading brethren should go to St. George, Utah, and hold a conference. The Lord did not reveal at that time the purpose of their visit, but merely that they should go and conduct a series of special conferences. They traveled to St. George by carriage.

The first session of the conference in St. George was held on May 17, 1899. **President Snow** said to the Saints there: "My brethren and sisters, we are in your midst because the Lord directed me to come; but the purpose of our coming is not clearly known at the present, but this will be made known to me during our sojourn among you" (quoted in Romney, *Life of Lorenzo Snow*, 456).

LeRoi C. Snow, son of the President, was reporting on the conference for the *Deseret News* and recalled what happened during a subsequent session when President Snow was speaking:

"All at once father paused in his discourse. Complete stillness filled the room. I shall never forget the thrill as long as I live. When he commenced to speak again his voice strengthened and the inspiration of God seemed to come over him, as well as over the entire assembly. His eyes seemed to brighten and his countenance to shine. He was filled with unusual power. Then he revealed to the Latter-day Saints the vision that was before him.

"God manifested to him there and then not only the purpose of the call to visit the Saints in the South, but also Lorenzo Snow's special mission, the great work for which God had prepared and preserved him, and he unveiled the vision to the people. He told them that he



The St. George Tabernacle, where the revelation President Snow received on tithing was first presented



Interior of the St. George Tabernacle

Photo courtesy of Utah State Historical Society

could see, as he had never realized before, how the law of tithing had been neglected by the people, also that the Saints, themselves, were heavily in debt, as well as the Church, and now through strict obedience to this law—the paying of a full and honest tithing—not only would the Church be relieved of its great indebtedness, but through the blessings of the Lord this would also be the means of freeing the Latter-day Saints from their individual obligations, and they would become a prosperous people" (LeRoi C. Snow, "The Lord's Way out of Bondage Was Not the Way of Men," *Improvement Era*, July 1938, 439).

In his discourse, **President Snow** told the Saints:

"The word of the Lord to you is not anything new; it is simply this: The Time Has Now Come For Every Latter-Day Saint, Who Calculates To Be Prepared For The Future And To Hold His Feet Strong Upon a Proper Foundation, To Do The Will Of The Lord And To Pay



The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

His Tithing In Full. That is the word of the Lord to you, and it will be the word of the Lord to every settlement throughout the land of Zion. After I leave you and you get to thinking about this, you will see yourselves that the time has come when every man should stand up and pay his tithing in full. The Lord has blessed us and has had mercy upon us in the past; but there are times coming when the Lord requires us to stand up and do that which He has commanded and not leave it any longer. What I say to you in this Stake of Zion I will say to every Stake of Zion that has been organized. There is no man or woman that now hears what I am saying who will feel satisfied if he or she fails to pay a full tithing" ("Discourse by President Lorenzo Snow," *Millennial Star*, Aug. 24, 1899, 533).

"Before I die," **President Snow** once said, "I hope to see the Church cleared of debt and in a commanding position financially" ("Characteristic Sayings of President Lorenzo Snow," *Improvement Era*, June 1919, 651). By revelation, he called on the Saints to be obedient to the law of tithing. The Saints' obedience to that call eventually brought the Church out of debt (during President Joseph F. Smith's administration) and established a firm temporal foundation for the kingdom of God. Much of today's growth in temples, chapels, and other buildings and Church programs around the world is the direct result of the temporal prosperity of the Church that came, and still comes, as the result of Saints living the law of tithing.

## He Enjoyed a Carriage Race [5.24]

After the conference in St. George, Utah, where the revelation on tithing had been received, President Lorenzo Snow and his party made their way by carriage from St. George through as many settlements as possible on their way back to Salt Lake City, preaching at every stop. As the party was traveling between Cove Fort and Fillmore, President Snow's buggy led the procession. The day was clear, and everyone was in good spirits.

"As a rule the party had some difficulty in maintaining the pace, but upon this occasion the [85-year-old] President's carriage was jogging along at a most comfortable rate. President Joseph F. Smith, who was second in line, drove along side the President and suggested, 'Perhaps it would be as well to go a trifle faster over these good roads, President Snow.'

"'Very well,' was the answer, 'just follow us.' President Snow gave his teamster a knowing nudge and in another minute both teams were on a forty-mile gait, over sage brush and ditches, and those behind saw only a cloud of dust, with now and then a glimpse of something resembling a buggy top. On and on the horses dashed, and the excitement of the occupants increased with every leap. It was invigorating. The horses had traveled neck and neck for two miles or more. The eyes of the aged leader flashed like diamonds as he rose in his seat and watched the progress of the race.

"'Go on, go on!' he shouted, 'never mind the ruts. We'll get beat. Go!' and the driver did so. President Smith's team was slightly outclassed, and the other managed to maintain the lead. Clumps of sage brush and five-foot washouts were as pebbles to these venerable leaders, now thoroughly enshrouded in their boyhood days. Up in the air and down, touching only the high places here and there, the contest lasted for fifteen miles, and President Snow loves to relate how his team came out victorious, though the honors are disputed by President Smith" (quoted in Romney, *Life of Lorenzo Snow*, 453, 455).

## He Received a Revelation about Man's Divine Potential [5.25]

"In the spring of 1840, just before leaving on his first mission to England, Lorenzo Snow spent an evening in the home of his friend, Elder H. G. Sherwood, in Nauvoo. Elder Sherwood was endeavoring to explain the parable of the Savior about the husbandman who sent forth servants at different hours of the day to labor in the vineyard. While thus engaged in thought this most important event occurred, as told by **President Snow** himself:

"'While attentively listening to his (Elder Sherwood's) explanation, the Spirit of the Lord rested mightily upon me—the eyes of my understanding were opened, and I saw as clear as the sun at noon-day, with wonder and astonishment, the pathway of God and man. I formed the following couplet which expresses the revelation, as it was shown to me . . . :

*As man now is,  
God once was:*

*As God now is,  
man may be.*

"I felt this to be a sacred communication which I related to no one except my sister Eliza, until I reached England, when in a confidential, private conversation with President Brigham Young, in Manchester, I related to him this extraordinary manifestation.'

"Soon after his return from England, in January, 1843, Lorenzo Snow related to the Prophet Joseph Smith his experience in Elder Sherwood's home. This was in a confidential interview in Nauvoo. The Prophet's reply was: 'Brother Snow, that is true gospel doctrine, and it is a revelation from God to you'" (Snow, *Improvement Era*, June 1919, 656).

The principle of man's divine potential had previously been revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Joseph Smith Sr. In fact, it was a statement made by that Patriarch to the Church four years earlier that first awakened the thought in Lorenzo Snow's mind. When he was investigating the teachings of the Church, **Joseph Smith Sr.** had said to him, "You will soon be convinced of the truth of the latter-day work, and be baptized, and you will become as great as you can possibly wish—even as great as God, and you cannot wish to be greater" (quoted in Snow, *Improvement Era*, June 1919, 654).



The First Presidency, September 18, 1898: George Q. Cannon, Lorenzo Snow, and Joseph F. Smith

However, the doctrine was not publicly taught until 1844.

Lorenzo Snow was present when the **Prophet Joseph Smith** gave the funeral sermon for King Follett, an elder in the Church, during the April conference of the Church. In his discourse, the Prophet taught:

“God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret. If the veil were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and all things by His power, was to make himself visible,—I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form—like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man; for Adam was created in the very fashion, image and likeness of God, and received instruction from, and walked, talked and conversed with Him, as one man talks and communes with another. . . .

“These are incomprehensible ideas to some, but they are simple. It is the first principle of the gospel to know for a certainty the character of God, and to know that we may converse with Him as one man converses with another, and that He was once a man like us; yea, that God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth, the same as Jesus Christ Himself did; and I will show it from the Bible” (*History of the Church*, 6:305).

Referring to those teachings from the Prophet’s sermon, which were printed in the *Times and Seasons* and the *Millennial Star*, LeRoi C. Snow, President Snow’s son, wrote:

“In President Snow’s own copy of the *Times and Seasons*, which I now have, he drew more particular attention, with his own indelible pencil, to this part of the Prophet’s King Follett sermon than any other reference in all the six volumes. This great hope in man’s destiny, through strict obedience to the gospel, was in his mind so constantly that he frequently referred to it in the home circle, in his public discourses, both when addressing aged parents and when talking to little children, and many of his intimate friends know that it was a favorite theme in private and confidential conversations.



President Lorenzo Snow

“Few comparisons were more frequently repeated by **President Snow** in his public speaking than the following:

“‘As an illustration, here is an infant upon its mother’s breast. It is without power or knowledge to feed and clothe itself. It is so helpless that it has to be fed by its mother. But see its possibilities! This infant has a father and a mother, though it knows scarcely anything about them. Who is its father? Who is its mother? Why, its father is an emperor, its mother is an empress, and they sit upon a throne, governing an empire. This little infant will some day, in all probability, sit upon his father’s throne, and govern and control the empire, just as King Edward of England now sits upon the throne of his mother. We should have this in mind; for we are the sons of God, as much so and more, if possible, than we are the sons of our earthly fathers.

“‘You sisters, I suppose, have read that poem which my sister, Eliza R. Snow Smith, composed, years ago, and which is sung quite frequently now in our meetings [see “O My Father,” *Hymns*, no. 292]. It tells us that we not only have a Father in “that high and glorious place.” but that we have a Mother, too; and you sisters will become as great as your Mother, if you are faithful’ ” (*Improvement Era*, June 1919, 658).

## They Shall Organize Worlds and Rule Over Them [5.26]

“Only a short time before his death, President Snow visited the Brigham Young University [then Brigham Young Academy], at Provo. President Brimhall escorted the party through one of the buildings; he wanted to reach the assembly room as soon as possible, as the students had already gathered. They were going through one of the kindergarten rooms; President Brimhall had reached the door and was about to open it and go on when **President Snow** said: ‘Wait a moment, President Brimhall, I want to see these children at work; what are they doing?’ Brother Brimhall replied that they were making clay spheres. ‘That is very interesting,’ the President said. ‘I want to watch them.’ He quietly watched the children for several minutes and then lifted a little girl, perhaps six years of age, and stood her on a table. He then took the clay sphere from her hand, and, turning to Brother Brimhall, said:

“‘President Brimhall, these children are now at play, making mud worlds, the time will come when some of these boys, through their faithfulness to the gospel, will



The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

progress and develop in knowledge, intelligence and power, in future eternities, until they shall be able to go out into space where there is unorganized matter and call together the necessary elements, and through their knowledge of and control over the laws and powers of nature, to organize matter into worlds on which their posterity may dwell, and over which they shall rule as gods'” (Snow, *Improvement Era*, June 1919, 658–59).

## The Trial of Mortality Is the School of Perfection [5.27]

In 1851, **Elder Lorenzo Snow**, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, gave the following counsel:

“In all your acts and conduct ever have the consciousness that you are now preparing and making yourselves a life to be continued through eternities; act upon no principle that you would be ashamed or unwilling to act upon in heaven, employ no means in the attainment of an object that a celestial enlightened conscience would disapprove. Whilst feelings and passions excite you to action, let

principles pure, honorable, holy, and virtuous, always rule and govern. Deity is within us, our spiritual organization is Deity—the child of God, begotten in his image. . . .

“We are here that we may be educated in a school of suffering and of fiery trials, which school was necessary for Jesus our elder brother, who, the scriptures tell us, was made perfect through suffering. It is necessary we suffer in all things, that we may be qualified and worthy to rule and govern all things, even as our Father in heaven and his eldest son Jesus” (“Address to the Saints of Great Britain,” *Millennial Star*, Dec. 1, 1851, 363).

## We Should Work Earnestly to Be Obedient [5.28]

**President Lorenzo Snow** taught:

“There is great enjoyment to be had in having done right in the past and meditating upon the fact, and feeling that we are doing right now, because it is the privilege of every Latter-day Saint to know when he is doing that which pertains to the things of the Lord. . . . There is



President Lorenzo Snow

this privilege that every Latter-day Saint should seek to enjoy, to know positively that his work is accepted of God. I am afraid Latter-day Saints are not much better and perhaps they are worse than other people if they do not have this knowledge and seek to do right. . . .

" . . . John says: 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet

appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is, and every man that hath this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure' [1 John 3:2–3].

"Every man having this hope in him purifies himself. There then naturally arises a determination to work for that high and noble position, to work for those wonderful promises made. There is an inducement to pursue a course of righteousness" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1898, 13).

## We Should Strive for Daily Improvement [5.29]

**President Lorenzo Snow** taught: "We ought to improve ourselves and move faster toward the point of perfection. It is said that we cannot be perfect. Jesus has commanded us to be perfect even as God, the Father, is perfect. It is our duty to try to be perfect, and it is our duty to improve each day, and look upon our course last week and do things better this week; do things better today than we did them yesterday, and go on and on from one degree of righteousness to another. Jesus will come by and by, and appear in our midst, as He appeared in the day when upon the earth among the Jews, and He will eat and drink with us and talk to us, and explain the mysteries of the Kingdom, and tell us things that are not lawful to talk about now" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1898, 13–14).

## We Require Divine Assistance to Overcome the World [5.30]

**President Lorenzo Snow** made the following statements about how we may receive help from God:

"I have read something that is very peculiar in regard to the promises that are made, and which I know will be fulfilled, if we on our part do our duty. I have not lived in this Church for about sixty-two years without finding out something. I devoted myself to be worthy to receive something that no mortal man can receive except through the spirit and power of the Holy Ghost, and the Lord has shown me things and made me to understand them as clearly as the sun at noonday in regard to what shall be the outcome of those Latter-day Saints that are faithful to their callings. . . . [He then quoted D&C 84:37–38 and Revelation 3:21.]

"There are many Scriptures bearing upon this point. I believe in this. I believe that we are the sons and daughters of God, and that He has bestowed upon us the capacity for infinite wisdom and knowledge, because He has given us a portion of Himself" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1898, 62–63).

"We are dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord to aid us and to manifest to us from time to time what is necessary for us to accomplish under the peculiar circumstances that may surround us. It is the privilege of Latter-day Saints, when they get into difficulties, to have supernatural power of God, and in faith, day by day; to secure from the circumstances which may surround us that which will be beneficial and advance us in the principles of holiness and sanctification, that we may as far as possible be like our Father" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1898, 2).

## Do Not Be Discouraged While Seeking Improvement [5.31]

**President Lorenzo Snow** explained:

"If we could read in detail the life of Abraham, or the lives of other great and holy men, we would doubtless find that their efforts to be righteous were not always crowned with success. Hence we should not be discouraged if we should be overcome in a weak moment; but, on the contrary, straightway repent of the error or the wrong we may have committed, and as far as possible repair it, and then seek to God for renewed strength to go on and do better. . . .

“If the Apostle Peter had become discouraged at his manifest failure to maintain the position that he had taken to stand by the Savior under all circumstances, he would have lost all; whereas, by repenting and persevering he lost nothing but gained all, leaving us too to profit by his experience. The Latter-day Saints should cultivate this ambition constantly which was so clearly set forth by the Apostles in former days. We should try to walk each day so that our conscience would be void of offense before everybody. . . . We must not allow ourselves to be discouraged whenever we discover our weakness” (*The Teachings of Lorenzo Snow*, ed. Clyde J. Williams [1996], 34–35).

## He Was a Builder of the Kingdom [5.32]

Lorenzo Snow was a schoolmaster, campaigner, husband, father, temple builder, superintendent of schools, temple officiator, branch president, pioneer, and Apostle. As a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, he sat in council and administered the business of the Church. Other responsibilities included managing the Perpetual Emigrating Fund, founding the Italian Mission, supervising the translation of the Book of Mormon into new languages, and preparing and publishing tracts. He served as regent of a university, territorial legislator, and founder of philosophical and scientific societies. Austere, devoted, and selfless—he was not laboring for himself but for the Master, whose servant he was. He was guided in his ministry by dreams and revelations.

Lorenzo Snow was called to preside among the Saints in Box Elder, Utah, which was later called Brigham City. He interrupted that assignment to serve in the Utah War and missions to Hawaii and the Holy Land. When he returned to Brigham City, the cooperative enterprise he established flowered. (The cooperative was dissolved under federal pressure against plural marriage in the late 1870s.)

Lorenzo Snow served as a counselor to the First Presidency under Brigham Young, served for nine years as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and, at the great age of 84 years, assumed the office of President of the Church. For three years he struggled mightily to wrest the Church from the financial difficulties resulting from decades of persecution. He emphasized the law of tithing once again among the Saints. He succeeded in seeing the Church well on its way to complete solvency and then went on to contemplate again the vision of his first apostolic years—to establish missions throughout

the earth. He sent missionaries to Japan and spoke of sending the gospel to all nations. He sought to purify Zion and was secure in the promise of his lifelong understanding that “the destiny of man is to be like his Father—a god in eternity.” He felt that this knowledge should be a bright, illuminating star before him at all times—in his heart, in his soul, and in his mind.

*As man now is, God once was:*

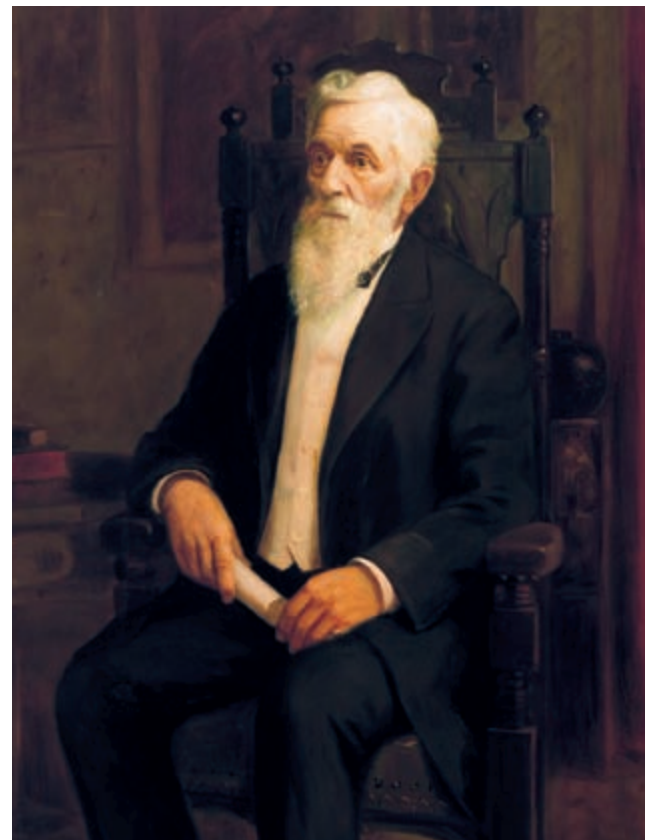
*As God now is, man may be.*

*A son of God, like God to be,*

*Would not be robbing Deity.*

[*Lorenzo Snow*, Improvement Era, June 1919, 651.]

President Lorenzo Snow was a prophet of God and should be ranked as one of the foremost social reformers of the age.



President Lorenzo Snow



# Joseph F. Smith

## Sixth President of the Church

6

### Highlights in the Life of Joseph F. Smith

Age	Events
	He was born November 13, 1838, in Far West, Caldwell County, Missouri, to Hyrum and Mary Fielding Smith.
5	His father, Hyrum Smith, was martyred (June 27, 1844).
9	He drove an ox team across the plains from Winter Quarters to the Salt Lake Valley (1848).
13	His mother, Mary Fielding Smith, died (Sept. 21, 1852).
15–19	He served a mission in Hawaii (1854–57).
19	He served in the Echo Canyon campaign of the Utah War (1857).
21	He married Levira A. Smith (Apr. 5, 1859).
21–24	He served a mission to Great Britain (1860–63).
25	He served a special mission to Hawaii (1864).
27–35	He began serving as a member of the Territorial House of Representatives (1865–74).
27	He was ordained an Apostle and set apart as a counselor to President Brigham Young (July 1, 1866; he also served as a counselor to Presidents John Taylor, 1880–87; Wilford Woodruff, 1889–98; and Lorenzo Snow, 1898–1901).
28	He was sustained as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (Oct. 8, 1867).
35	He served as president of the European Mission (1874–75).
39	He served a mission to the eastern United States to obtain information on the history of the Church (1878).
46	He went into voluntary exile because of persecution for practicing plural marriage (1884–91).
51	The Manifesto ending plural marriage (Official Declaration 1) was issued (1890).
54	He served as a member of the Constitutional Convention for the state of Utah (1893).
62	He became President of the Church (Oct. 17, 1901; he was sustained Nov. 10).
65	He testified before Congress (2–Mar. 9, 1904); he issued a second manifesto on plural marriage (Apr. 6, 1904).
67	He was the first Church President to tour Europe during his administration (summer, 1906).
70	The First Presidency issued an official statement on the origin of man (Nov. 1909).
74	The family home evening program was introduced (1915).
75	The First Presidency issued a doctrinal exposition on the Father and the Son (1916).
79	He received a vision of the redemption of the dead (D&C 138; 3 Oct. 1918).
80	He died in Salt Lake City, Utah (Nov. 19, 1918).

## He Was Born during Turbulent Times [6.1]

Joseph F. Smith was born on November 13, 1838, during a period of severe persecution of the Saints of God. His father, Hyrum Smith, along with his uncle, the Prophet Joseph Smith, were imprisoned in Liberty Jail. His mother, Mary Fielding Smith, ill from physical and emotional strain, needed help taking care of him and Hyrum's five other children.



Mary Fielding Smith, mother of Joseph F. Smith

Members of the mob-militia gathered outside the home of Hyrum Smith in Far West, Missouri. The voice of Samuel Bogart, a fiery preacher who had been a major force in inspiring mob hatred toward the Saints, could be heard inside the house where Mary Fielding Smith lay sick in bed. Her sister, Mercy Thompson, concerned that Mary might not recover from her illness, tried to quiet her own fears and reassure her sister.

Mary's serious condition had been aggravated emotionally when her husband was yanked away from their home at bayonet point. A fiendish guard told Mary to say her last farewell to Hyrum, for she need not suppose she would see him alive again. She suffered under these circumstances while waiting for the birth of her first child (which occurred two weeks later). She named the new baby after her beloved brother, Joseph Fielding. She had been so taxed that she did not have sufficient strength to nurse her little son. Her sister Mercy (whose husband had been forced to flee to save his life) moved in to care for her and nurse the baby.

Members of the militia had forced their way into many homes on the pretext of searching for arms, but in reality had used the opportunity to plunder and abuse the Saints. Up to this hour the two sisters had not been molested, but in a moment the ruffians were within their home. Not caring for anyone's condition, the mobbers forced all but the baby, Joseph F., into one area of the house



Hyrum Smith, father of Joseph F. Smith

and then began to loot and pillage. They broke into a trunk and helped themselves to its contents. In another room, some of the mob picked up a bed and threw it on top of another bed during their frantic search for loot. In their disregard for life they had buried the infant Joseph F. beneath the suffocating weight of the bedding.

Having taken what they wanted, the mob departed as swiftly as it had come. It took some moments for the household to recover from this invasion. Suddenly Joseph F. was remembered. With great anxiety the quilts and blankets were pulled from the bed and the small baby recovered. Though buried for some time and blue from lack of oxygen, he had been spared from death. Mary held the tiny infant in her arms, grateful that he had survived.

**Elder Samuel O. Bennion**, a member of the Seventy, testified: "I believe that the Lord knew him before he ever came here, and I believe that when Joseph F. Smith was born in Missouri that God knew him, and I believe that Lucifer, the 'son of the morning,' knew him, and that he, the adversary of all good, sought to destroy him. . . . I believe that he was recognized by Lucifer, that he was to become a great leader in Israel" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1917, 121).

## He Was Mature Beyond His Years [6.2]

Joseph F. Smith's youth was unusually strenuous and served to mature him beyond his years. When he was five years old, his father and uncle were assassinated at Carthage, Illinois. At seven he drove an ox team from Montrose, Iowa, near Nauvoo, to Winter Quarters, more than 200 miles.

"Mary Smith with her family remained in Nauvoo until the summer of 1846. It was only a day or two before the battle of Nauvoo, when, under threats, she hastily loaded her children in a flat boat with such household effects as could be carried, and crossed the Mississippi to a point near Montrose. There under the trees on the bank of the river the family pitched camp that night, and there they experienced the horror of listening to the bombardment of Nauvoo. . . . Although Joseph was not yet eight years of age, he was required to drive one of the ox teams most of the way from Montrose to Winter Quarters. At this place the family sojourned until the spring of 1848, endeavoring in the meantime, by help from friends who were not prepared to continue on the journey, and by constant toil, to gather sufficient teams and necessities to make the journey across the plains" (Joseph Fielding Smith, comp., *Life of Joseph F. Smith* [1938], 131).

When almost nine years old, Joseph F., along with several other boys, was assigned to watch the cattle as they



Mary Fielding Smith and her son Joseph F. traveling to the Salt Lake Valley

were sent out to graze about two miles from the town of Winter Quarters. One morning as the cattle grazed, the boys mounted their horses and amused themselves by running short races and jumping ditches. Suddenly, they were attacked by Indians.

**Joseph F.** recalled: "My first impression, or impulse was to save the cattle from being driven off, for in a most incredible short time, I thought of going to the valley; of our dependence upon our cattle, and the horror of being compelled to remain at Winter Quarters. I suited the action to the thought, and at full speed dashed out to head the cattle and if possible turn them towards home" (quoted in Smith, comp. *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, 135).

While the others ran for help, **Joseph F.** tried to drive the cattle back toward the town as fast as he could, but he was unable to outrun the Indians. They soon overtook him. Even so, the boy continued to dodge and run until his horse became winded. He said: "One Indian rode upon the left side and one on the right side of me, and each took me by an arm and leg and lifted me from my horse; they then slackened their speed until my horse run from under me, then they chucked me down with great violence to the ground. Several horses from behind jumped over me, but did not hurt me. My horse was secured by the Indians and without slackening speed they rode on in the direction from whence they had come" (quoted in Smith, comp., *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, 136).

The chase, however, had taken enough time that men approaching from the fields prevented the Indians' return. The cattle were saved, but the horse Joseph F. was riding was never found.

## His Mother's Faith Was Demonstrated [6.3]

While on a trip to procure provisions for the long journey from Winter Quarters to the Salt Lake Valley, young Joseph F. Smith witnessed his mother's trust and faith in God in overcoming obstacles. Camping by a creek one night near some men with a herd of cattle, Joseph F. turned his family's oxen out to graze.

The next morning their best yoke of oxen could not be found. **Joseph F.** and his uncle searched all morning until they were both disheartened. He recalled: "I was the first to return to our wagons, and as I approached I saw my mother kneeling down in prayer. I halted for a moment and then drew gently near enough to hear her pleading with the Lord not to suffer us to be left in this helpless condition, but to lead us to recover our lost team, that we might continue our travels in safety. When she arose from her knees I was standing nearby. The first expression I caught upon her precious face was a lovely smile, which discouraged as I was, gave me renewed hope and an assurance I had not felt before" (quoted in Smith, comp., *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, 132).

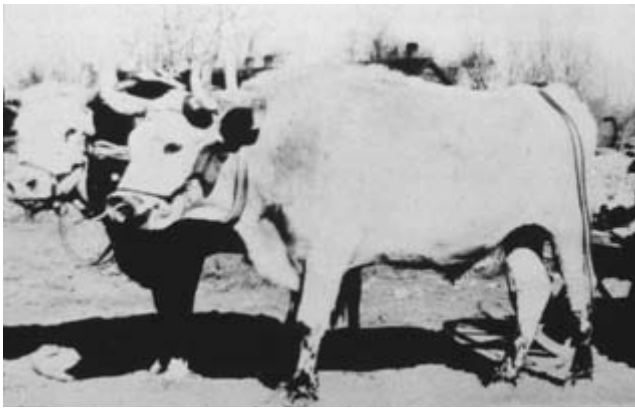
After Joseph F. and his uncle had returned to camp, Joseph F.'s mother insisted that they eat while she went out to look for the oxen. Her brother tried to dissuade her, insisting that they had looked everywhere. But she was determined to go and walked some distance toward the river. There she was met by one of the men from the cowherd who told her he had seen the oxen headed in the opposite direction from the one in which she was walking. She ignored him and kept on walking. Upon reaching the river, she turned and beckoned her son and brother. They hurried to her side and, as **Joseph F.** wrote, "There I saw our oxen fastened to a clump of willows growing in the bottom of a deep gulch which had been washed out of the sandy bank of the river by the little spring creek, perfectly concealed from view. We were not long in releasing them from bondage and getting back to our camp, where the other cattle had been fastened to the wagon wheels all the morning, and we were soon on our way home rejoicing. The worthy herdsmen had suddenly departed when they saw mother would not



Mary Fielding Smith

heed them; I hope they went in search of estray [strayed or lost] honesty, which I trust they found" (quoted in Smith, comp., *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, 133).

Later, during the journey west, young **Joseph F.** once again saw the power of his mother's faith demonstrated. Having traveled a good share of the way to Zion, one of their best oxen fell to the ground. "The ox stiffened out spasmodically evidently in the throes of death. The death of this faithful animal would have been fatal to the progress of Widow Smith on the journey to the valley. . . . Producing a bottle of consecrated oil, Widow Smith asked her brother and James Lawson if they would please administer to the ox just as they would do to a sick person, for it was vital to her interest that the ox be restored that she might pursue her journey. Her



Through prayer, Mary Fielding Smith found her lost oxen.

earnest plea was complied with. These brethren poured oil on the head of the ox and then laid their hands upon it and rebuked the power of the destroyer just as they would have done if the animal had been a human being. Immediately the ox got up and within a very few moments again pulled in the yoke as if nothing had ever happened. This was a great astonishment to the company. Before the company had proceeded very far another of her oxen fell down as the first, but with the same treatment he also got up, and this was repeated the third time; by administration the oxen were fully healed" (Smith, comp., *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, 150).

### As a Boy, He Was Dependable [6.4]

**Joseph F. Smith** recorded: "My principal occupation from 1848 to 1854, was that of herd-boy, although I made a hand always in the harvest field and at threshings, and in the canyons cutting and hauling wood. Though I had the principal care of the family stock, as herd-boy from



The old adobe home. This home was dismantled and moved to the Pioneer Trails State Park, near the "This Is the Place" monument in Salt Lake City.

1846 to 1854, I cannot recall the loss of a single 'hoof' by death, straying away, or otherwise, from neglect or carelessness on my part during that period" (quoted in Smith, comp., *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, 163).

At one time during the winter of 1848, "he saw a wolf chasing a sheep out in the open field. It was a rainy day and the ground was soft. The wool of the sheep was heavy with moisture which retarded its flight. As the wolf was about to seize the sheep Joseph F. arrived at the rescue and saved the sheep. Although wolves were numerous and bold, Joseph F. was often out on the range after dark, in cold weather, where he would hear the ferocious howls of the marauders. He had a dog to aid him in his work, but at times the dog would become terrified because of the great number of wolves and would crouch at his feet. This was the nature of the amusement accorded to this faithful boy at an age when most boys like to play and engage in athletic sports" (Smith, comp., *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, 164).



Rescuing a calf from wolves

## He Overcame Many Trials during His Missions [6.5]

Soon after his 15th birthday, Joseph F. Smith was ordained an elder and called to serve a three-year mission in Hawaii. During his mission he overcame fatigue, severe illness, and material loss by flood and fire. He preached, healed the sick, cast out devils, and presided over numerous branches of the Church.



Joseph F. Smith's first mission was to the Hawaiian Islands when he was 15 years old. This was the type of native Hawaiian grass hut in which he would have frequently stayed.

**Elder Charles W. Nibley**, then Presiding Bishop of the Church, talked about the challenges overcome by the 15-year-old elder: "On this mission to the Sandwich Island [present-day Hawaii], he encountered severe hardships. I remember on our first trip over to the Islands, and I was over there on four trips with him, that sailing among the different small islands, he would point out to me such and such a place: 'There is where I lived so long in a little straw hut'—which burned down or which was destroyed by flood. Here was another place where he had lain sick and where the good Hawaiian people had ministered to him. This experience, and the other, he would tell as we journeyed along, all of which, if I had time to relate, are faith-promoting and inspiring, and would point out to you the manliness of the young boy—for he was then, as I told you, fifteen or sixteen years of age" (in Conference Report, June 1919, 62).

Shortly after arriving in the islands, Elder Smith became very ill. Kind treatment by friends helped him to recover.

Undaunted, he used his convalescent time to study the Hawaiian language. He had been promised by Elder Parley P. Pratt that he would master the language by faith and study. He applied both of these, and within 100 days he was speaking the language fluently.

Sometime later he was taken ill again and did not fully recover for three months. Nevertheless, he applied himself to gospel study and to perfecting his language skills. During this second illness he was cared for by a young native brother and his wife. On one occasion the power of the adversary seized the woman of the house, causing her to go through all manner of hideous contortions. Though fearful at first, the boy prayed and found the power by which he successfully rebuked the evil spirit.

Many years later, Bishop Charles W. Nibley recounted how President Joseph F. Smith was received by the Saints when he returned to Hawaii years after his mission. The members gathered together to greet the prophet as his boat docked at a wharf in Honolulu. He was covered with wreaths of flowers and many tears. During the festivities, Bishop Nibley "noticed a poor, old blind woman tottering under the weight of about ninety years, being led in [to the place where the Saints were gathering]. She had a few choice bananas in her hand. It was her all—her offering. She was calling, 'Iosepa, Iosepa!' Instantly, when he saw her, he ran to her and clasped her in his arms, hugged her, and kissed her over and over again, patting her on the head saying, 'Mama, Mama, my dear old Mama!'

"And with tears streaming down his cheeks he turned to me and said, 'Charley, she nursed me when I was a boy, sick and without anyone to care for me. She took me in and was a mother to me!'" (quoted in Smith, comp., *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, 186).



Joseph F. Smith, about 1857

## A Dream Encouraged Him on His Mission [6.6]

As a young missionary—humble, sick, and discouraged—he was strengthened by a dream of his father and mother and of the Prophet Joseph Smith and others. **President Joseph F. Smith** later wrote:

“I did have a dream one time. To me it was a literal thing; it was a reality.

“I was very much oppressed, once, on a mission. I was almost naked and entirely friendless, except the friendship of a poor, benighted, degraded people. I felt as if I was so debased in my condition of poverty, lack of intelligence and knowledge, just a boy, that I hardly dared look a white man in the face.



Joseph F. Smith

“While in that condition I dreamed that I was on a journey, and I was impressed that I ought to hurry—hurry with all my might, for fear I might be too late. . . . Finally I came to a wonderful mansion. . . . I knew that was my destination. As I passed towards it, as fast as I could, I saw a notice, ‘Bath.’ I turned aside quickly and went into the bath and washed myself clean. I opened up this little bundle that I had, and there was a pair of white, clean garments, a thing I had not seen for a long time. . . . I put them on.

Then I rushed to what appeared to be a great opening, or door. I knocked and the door opened, and the man who stood there was the Prophet Joseph Smith. He looked at me a little reprovingly, and the first words he said: ‘Joseph, you are late.’ Yet I took confidence and said:

“‘Yes, but I am clean—I am clean!’

“He clasped my hand and drew me in, then closed the door. . . . When I entered I saw my father, and Brigham and Heber, and Willard, and other good men that I had known, standing in a row. . . . My mother was there . . . ; and I could name over as many as I remember of their names who sat there, who seemed to be among the chosen, among the exalted. . . .

“When I awoke that morning I was a man, although only a boy. There was not anything in the world that I

feared. . . . That vision, that manifestation and witness that I enjoyed at that time has made me what I am, if I am anything that is good, or clean, or upright before the Lord, if there is anything good in me. That has helped me out in every trial and through every difficulty” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [1939], 541–43).

At age 21 he married Levira A. Smith; at 22 he served his second mission—this time to Great Britain, where he presided over a number of districts. After being home again for only five months, he was called back to the Hawaiian islands on a third mission, where he served as an assistant to two of the Apostles.

## His Desire Was to Bear a Strong Testimony [6.7]

In an 1854 letter from the mission field to his cousin, Elder George A. Smith, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, **Elder Joseph F. Smith** wrote poignantly of his desires:

“I know that the work in which I am engaged is the work of the living and true God, and I am ready to bear my testimony of the same, at any time, or at any place, or in whatsoever circumstances I may be placed; and hope and pray that I ever may prove faithful in serving the Lord, my God. I am happy to say that I am ready to go through thick and thin for this cause in which I am engaged; and truly hope and pray that I may prove faithful to the end. . . .

“Give my love to all the folks; . . . and tell them that I desire an interest in their prayers, that I may hold out faithful, and bear off my calling with honor to myself and the cause in which I am engaged. I had rather die on this mission, than to disgrace myself or my calling. These are



Book of Mormon in Hawaiian and mission boots

the sentiments of my heart. My prayer is that we may hold out faithful to the end, and eventually be crowned in the kingdom of God, with those that have gone before us" (quoted in Smith, comp., *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, 176–77).

## Under No Condition Would He Deny His Testimony [6.8]

On his way home from his first mission to Hawaii, Joseph F. Smith and his companions ran into a group of extremists when they camped one evening. The leader of the group swore he would kill anyone who was a Mormon. Pointing his gun at Joseph F., he demanded, "Are you a 'Mormon'?" Expecting fully for the gun to discharge, nonetheless he answered, "Yes, siree; dyed in the wool; true blue, through and through." The answer, given boldly and without hesitation, completely disarmed the belligerent man, and in bewilderment all he could do was shake the young man's hand and praise him for his courage. The men then rode off and did not harm them further (see Smith, comp., *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, 189).

Three years later, in 1860, Joseph F. again showed the strength of his conviction. This time he was traveling to serve a mission to England. As he and his companions approached Nauvoo, where they had decided to visit for a while, they found a particularly bitter mob spirit and threats of murder. Although Joseph F. and his companions had been evasive about revealing who they were, so as to avoid trouble, a Catholic priest asked them directly if they were Mormon elders. At that moment the temptation to deny the truth was very strong; but resisting, Joseph F. said they were. The reply satisfied the priest and did not incur the anger of the other people. When they arrived at Nauvoo, they found themselves in the same quarters as the priest. **Joseph F. Smith** later stated of this experience, "I had never felt happier . . . than when I saw the minister there, and knew that we had told him the truth about our mission" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 534).

## He Was Called to Be an Apostle [6.9]

"July 1, 1866, Joseph F. Smith met with President Brigham Young and a number of the Apostles in the upper room in the Historian's Office, in a council and prayer meeting according to the custom of the presiding brethren; Joseph F. was the secretary of this council. After the close of the prayer circle, **President Brigham Young** suddenly turned to his brethren and said, 'Hold on, shall I do as I feel [led]? I always feel well to do as the Spirit constrains me. It is my mind to ordain Brother



Joseph F. Smith, about 1874

Joseph F. Smith to the Apostleship, and to be one of my counselors.' He then called upon each of the brethren present for an expression of their feelings, and each responded individually stating that such action met with their hearty approval. The brethren then laid their hands upon the head of Joseph F." (Smith, comp., *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, 226–27).

A little over a year after being ordained an Apostle, Elder Smith was set apart as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. While an Apostle, he served as a counselor in the First Presidency, president of the European Mission, a counselor in the MIA, a councilman on both the Salt Lake City and Provo city councils, and as a member of the territorial legislature. He also presided over the state constitutional convention of 1882.

## The Home Is the Most Sacred Institution of Heaven [6.10]

Called to practice plural marriage, **Joseph F. Smith** received five wives over the years. Thoughtful and kind, he deeply loved his wives and children. Following are some statements he made about the importance of home and family:

"The richest of all my earthly joys is in my precious children" (quoted in Smith, comp., *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, 449).

"There is no substitute for the home. Its foundation is as ancient as the world, and its mission has been ordained of God from the earliest times. . . . The home then is more than a habitation, it is an institution which stands for stability and love in individuals as well as in nations" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 300).

"The very foundation of the kingdom of God, of righteousness, of progress, of development, of eternal life and eternal increase in the kingdom of God, is laid in the divinely ordained home; and there should be no difficulty in holding in the highest reverence and exalted thought, the home, if it can be built upon the principles of purity, of true affection, of righteousness and justice. The man and his wife who have perfect confidence

in each other, and who determine to follow the laws of God in their lives and fulfil the measure of their mission in the earth, would not be, and could never be, contented without the home. Their hearts, their feelings, their minds, their desires would naturally trend toward the building of a home and family and of a kingdom of their own; to the laying of the foundation of eternal increase and power, glory, exaltation and dominion, worlds without end" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 304).



Joseph F. Smith in his forties

## He Taught about the Patriarchal Order [6.11]

**President Joseph F. Smith** taught:

"There is no higher authority in matters relating to the family organization, and especially when that organization is presided over by one holding the higher Priesthood, than that of the father. The authority is time honored, and among the people of God in all dispensations it has been highly respected and often emphasized by the teachings of the prophets who were inspired of God. The patriarchal order is of divine origin and will continue throughout time and eternity. . . . Wives and children should be taught to feel that the patriarchal order in the kingdom of God has been established for a wise and beneficent purpose, and should sustain the head of the household and encourage him in the discharge of his duties, and do all in their power to aid him in the exercise of the rights and privileges which God has bestowed upon the head of the home. This patriarchal order has its divine spirit and purpose, and those who disregard it under one pretext or another are out of harmony with the spirit of God's laws as they are ordained for recognition in the home. It is not merely a question of who is perhaps the best qualified. Neither is it wholly a question of who is living the most worthy life. It is a question largely of law and order, and its importance is seen often from the fact that the authority remains and is respected long after a man is really unworthy to exercise it.

"This authority carries with it a responsibility and a grave one, as well as its rights and privileges, and men can not be too exemplary in their lives, nor fit themselves

too carefully to live in harmony with this important and God-ordained rule of conduct in the family organization. Upon this authority certain promises and blessings are predicated, and those who observe and respect this authority have certain claims on divine favor which they cannot have except they respect and observe the laws that God has established for the regulation and authority of the home. 'Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee,' was a fundamental law to ancient Israel, and is binding upon every member of the Church today, for the law is eternal" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 286–88).

## Family Home Evening Was Introduced [6.12]

With the exception of war, perhaps no other factor characterizes the 20th century better than the battle against the family. Many forces are at work tearing at the foundations of this God-ordained institution. Loud, strong voices full of seductive appeal cry from opposing sides. Abortion, alternate forms of marriage, homosexuality, the so-called women's liberation movement, and the pressure to have no or few children are all loudly proclaimed with every other kind of selfishness. The proponents of these insidious ideas and movements express loud indignation when any defend the most noble God-given institution of the family.

Long before any of these were critical issues, the Lord inspired President Joseph F. Smith on the need to strengthen the homes of the Saints so that they might effectively combat those forces that would try to pull the home apart. An official announcement issued by the **First Presidency** in 1915 urged the Saints to begin a program



The Joseph F. Smith family in 1898



The Joseph F. Smith home on 200 North, Salt Lake City

that would be the basis of a strong and happy home. This announcement read, in part, as follows:

"We advise and urge the inauguration of a 'Home Evening' throughout the Church, at which time fathers and mothers may gather their boys and girls about them in the home and teach them the word of the Lord. They may thus learn more fully the needs and requirements of their families; at the same time familiarizing themselves and their children more thoroughly with the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This 'Home Evening' should be devoted to prayer, singing hymns, songs, instrumental music, scripture-reading, family topics and specific instruction on the principles of the Gospel, and on the ethical problems of life, as well as the duties and obligations of children to parents, the home, the Church, society and the Nation. For the smaller children appropriate recitations, songs, stories and games may be introduced. Light refreshments of such a nature as may be largely prepared in the home might be served.

"Formality and stiffness should be studiously avoided, and all the family should participate in the exercises.

"These gatherings will furnish opportunities for mutual confidence between parents and children, between brothers and sisters, as well as give opportunity for words of warning, counsel and advice by parents to their boys and girls. They will provide opportunity for the boys and girls to honor father and mother, and to show their appreciation of the blessings of home so that the promise of the Lord to them may be literally fulfilled and their lives be prolonged and made happy. . . .

"If the Saints obey this counsel, we promise that great blessings will result. Love at home and obedience to parents will increase. Faith will be developed in the hearts of the youth of Israel, and they will gain power to combat the evil influences and temptations which beset them" ("Home Evening," *Improvement Era*, June 1915, 733–34).

## He Took Time and Put Effort into Caring for His Children [6.13]

**Bishop Charles W. Nibley**, then Presiding Bishop of the Church, stated: "I have visited at his home when one of his little children was down sick. I have seen him come home from his work at night tired, as he naturally would be, and yet he would walk the floor for hours with that little one in his arms, petting it and loving it, encouraging it in every way with such tenderness and such a soul of pity and love as not one mother in a thousand would show" ("Reminiscences of President Joseph F. Smith," *Improvement Era*, Jan. 1919, 197).

## He Shared His Testimony with His Children and Taught Them [6.14]

One of President Joseph F. Smith's sons, **Joseph Fielding Smith**, remembering the power of his father's teachings, said: "On such occasions [when he was home], frequent family meetings were held and he spent his time instructing his children in the principles of the gospel. They one and all rejoiced in his presence and were grateful for the wonderful words of counsel and instruction which he imparted on these occasions in the midst of anxiety. They have never forgotten what they were taught, and the impressions have

remained with them and will likely do so forever. . . . My father was the most tenderhearted man I ever knew. . . . Among my fondest memories are the hours I have spent by his side discussing principles of the gospel and receiving instruction as only he could give it. In this way the foundation for my own knowledge was laid in truth" (quoted in Joseph Fielding Smith Jr. and John J. Stewart, *The Life of Joseph Fielding Smith* [1972], 40).



Joseph F. Smith

## Responsible Parents Teach Their Children Gospel Standards [6.15]

**President Joseph F. Smith** counseled the Saints:

“God forbid that there should be many of us so unwisely indulgent, so thoughtless and so shallow in our affection for our children that we dare not check them in a wayward course, in wrong-doing and in their foolish love for the things of the world more than for the things of righteousness, for fear of offending them. I want to say this: Some people have grown to possess such unlimited confidence in their children that they do not believe it possible for them to be led astray or to do wrong. . . . The result is, they turn them loose, morning, noon, and night, to attend all kinds of entertainments and amusements, often in company with those whom they know not and do not understand. Some of our children are so innocent that they do not suspect evil, and therefore, they are off their guard and are trapped into evil. . . .



Joseph Fielding Smith and  
Joseph F. Smith, 1914

“ . . . I want to sound a note of warning to the Latter-day Saints. The time has come for them to look after their children. Every device possible to the understanding and ingenuity of cunning men, is being used for the purpose of diverting our children from the faith of the gospel and from the love of the truth. . . . Our children can be led away from their parents and from

the faith of the Gospel, only when they are in a condition that they know not the truth for themselves, not having had a proper example before them to impress it upon their minds. . . .

“I may be pardoned, since it is pretty well known everywhere, I believe, that I speak my mind if I speak at all, if I say to you, . . . I would rather take one of my children to the grave than I would see him turn away from this gospel. I would rather follow their bodies to the cemetery, and see them buried in innocence, than I would see them corrupted by the ways of the world” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1909, 4–5).

## He Loved His Family with a Pure and Holy Love [6.16]

“‘It would be difficult to find in any part of the world any family where the members manifested greater love and solicitude for each other than in the family of President Joseph F. Smith,’ wrote [his son] Joseph Fielding. ‘No father ever at any age of the world, we feel confident in saying, had a greater love for wife or wives and children, and was more earnestly concerned for their welfare. . . . Out in the world, where marriage



Joseph F. and Julina Smith on  
their 50th wedding anniversary,  
1916

is looked upon too frequently merely as a contract, which on the slightest provocation may be broken; where families are constantly racked by disunity, and where, through the action of the divorce courts, children are deprived of the most sacred right of loving parental affection, there is a general feeling that a family such as that of President Smith’s could only be a family of discord and jealous strife and hatred. To the contrary, there was and is no monogamist family which could be more united. To the astonishment of the unbelieving world, the wives loved each other dearly. In times of sickness they tenderly waited upon and nursed each other. When death invaded one of the homes and a child was taken, all wept and mourned together with sincere grief. . . . Two of the wives [Julina and Edna] were skilled and licensed practitioners in obstetrics, and brought many babies into the world. They waited upon each other and upon the other wives, and when babies came all rejoiced equally with the mother.

“‘The children recognized each other as brothers and sisters, full-fledged not as half, as they would be considered in the world. They defended each and stood by each other no matter which branch of the family was theirs. . . . Joseph F. Smith loved his wives and children with a holy love that is seldom seen, never surpassed. Like Job of old, he prayed for them night and day and asked the Lord to keep them pure and undefiled in the path of righteousness’” (Smith and Stewart, *Life of Joseph Fielding Smith*, 46–47).

## He Was Separated from His Family [6.17]

One of the greatest trials of Joseph F. Smith's life was being exiled from his family for years; but, under the direction of President John Taylor, he did so to avoid arrest during the so-called "Mormon Crusade," in which the Church was persecuted for plural marriage. Much of that time he spent in Hawaii directing the work there. Far away, powerless, indignant, and suffering from the most acute illness of his life, he would receive word about the harassment of the Saints, his family's forced abandonment of their home, the death of a child. But determined, unfaltering, he wrote, "Trials are necessary to the perfection of mankind, as friction is necessary to separate the dross of human judgment from the pure gold of divine wisdom" (quoted in Smith, comp., *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, 280). The day of amnesty finally came, however, and the home found joy as its father returned.

## He Knew the Grief and Heartache of Losing a Child [6.18]

Ten times **Elder Joseph F. Smith** and his wives mourned the death of one of their children—children for whom he tenderly and earnestly prayed and helped raise.

"In 1898, March 17th, at the passing of another of his precious babies—Ruth—he related how he had nursed the little one tenderly during her sickness and then prayed earnestly for her recovery. 'But O, our prayers did not avail!'

"'At last I took her in my arms and walked the floor with her and helplessly, powerless to aid my darling, dying child, I watched her feeble breath depart to come no more in time, and her glorious intelligence, her bright angelic spirit took her flight to God from whence she came. It was then about 20 minutes to 8 p.m. With her was swept away all our fond hope and love and joy of earth. Oh! how I loved that child! She was intelligent beyond her years; bright, loving, choice and joyous! But she is gone to join the beauteous and glorious spirits of her brothers and sisters, who have gone before! Sara Ella, M. Josephine, Alfred, Heber, Rhoda, Albert, Robert and John. O my soul! I see my own sweet mother's arms extended welcoming to her embrace the ransomed glorious spirit of my own sweet babe! O my God! For this glorious vision, I thank Thee! And there too are gathered to my Father's mansion all my darling lovely ones; not in infantile helplessness, but in all the power and glory and majesty of sanctified spirits! Full of intelligence, of joy and grace, and truth. My darling little petling in her own bright home with those of her brothers and sisters who had preceded her. How blessed, how happy is she! How sorrowful are we!'" (Smith, comp., *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, 463).

## He Was Courageous and Undaunted in Defending Truth [6.19]

Fearless and articulate, Joseph F. Smith was a powerful preacher and writer. As a tool of the Holy Spirit, he could make tears well, joy distill, and men and women forget the fatigue of a long journey. Once, a veteran newsman became so enthralled with his talk that he forgot to take notes. Joseph F. Smith turned these gifts to the defense of the kingdom—denouncing its enemies, defending its truths—until he became known as the "Fighting Apostle."

In a tribute to President Smith, **John A. Widtsoe**, who would later be a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote:

"The Fighting Apostle they called him, as he hurled back the untruths about 'Mormonism,' and his relentless watchfulness became a deterrent power among those who planned evil for a good and peaceful people.

"A fighting apostle he has always been—fighting for the cause of truth" (quoted in Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 511). (See *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 2nd ed. [2003], 431–34, for more details concerning the persecutions of the Saints during the anti-polygamy years.)



The First Presidency at the time of the Salt Lake Temple dedication, about 1893: George Q. Cannon, Wilford Woodruff, and Joseph F. Smith

## He Was Called as President of the Church

[6.20]

At the death of President Lorenzo Snow in 1901, the office of President of the Church rested upon the shoulders of Joseph F. Smith. Several leading brethren had long before felt that Joseph F. would become president of the Church.



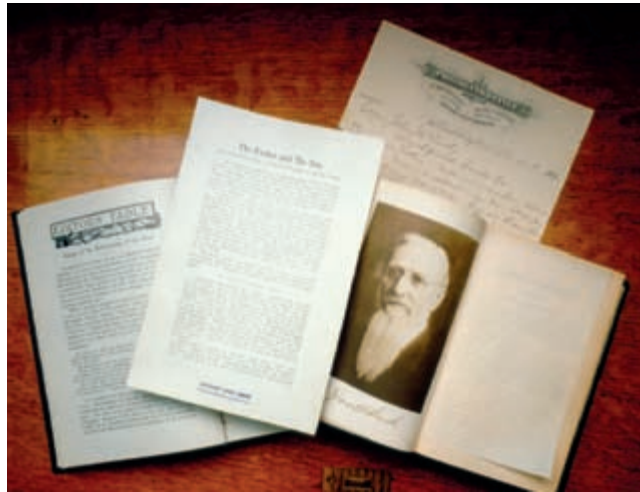
President Joseph F. Smith

“Both Presidents Wilford Woodruff and Lorenzo Snow had prophesied that Joseph F. Smith would sometime become president of the Church. Thirty-seven years earlier in the Hawaiian Islands when President Snow, then a member of the Council of Twelve, nearly lost his life by drowning, he declared that the Lord made known to him ‘that this young man, Joseph F. Smith . . .

would some day be the Prophet of God on the earth.’

**President Woodruff** was once relating to a group of children some incidents in the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith. ‘He turned to Elder Joseph F. Smith and asked him to arise to his feet. Elder Smith complied. “Look at him, children,” Wilford Woodruff said, “for he resembles the Prophet Joseph more than any man living. He will become the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I want everyone of you to remember what I have told you this morning.”’ After President Woodruff’s death, President Snow told Joseph F. Smith that the spirit of God whispered to him that he, Joseph, would succeed him, Lorenzo, as president of the Church” (Smith and Stewart, *Life of Joseph Fielding Smith*, 124).

**President Heber J. Grant** said: “Lorenzo Snow was drowned in the harbor of Honolulu, in the Hawaiian Islands, and it took some hours to bring him to life again. At that particular time the Lord revealed to him the fact that the young man Joseph F. Smith, who had refused to get off the vessel that had carried them from San Francisco to Honolulu, and get into a small boat, would some day be the Prophet of God. Answering Lorenzo Snow who was in charge of the company, he said: ‘If you by the authority of the Priesthood of God, which you hold, tell me to get into that boat and attempt to land, I will do so, but unless you command me in the authority of the Priesthood, I will not do so, because it is not safe to attempt to land in a small boat while this typhoon is



Publications of Joseph F. Smith: *Gospel Doctrine* and *The Father and the Son*

raging.’ They laughed at the young man Joseph F. Smith, but he said, ‘The boat will capsize.’ The others got into the boat, and it did capsize; and but for the blessings of the Lord in resuscitating Lorenzo Snow he would not have lived, because he was drowned upon that occasion. It was revealed to him, then and there, that the boy, with the courage of his convictions, with the iron will to be laughed at and scorned as lacking courage to go in that boat, and who stayed on that vessel, would yet be the Prophet of God. Lorenzo Snow told me this upon more than one occasion, long years before Joseph F. Smith came to the presidency of the Church” (in Conference Report, June 1919, 10–11).

**Elder Melvin J. Ballard**, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and closely associated with President Smith, said: “I recall my early recollections of President Smith with a good deal of pleasure—because I admired him, he was to me my ideal, I tried in my life, as I became acquainted with him, to be as he was. I knew as a child, for the Lord revealed it unto me, that President Smith would some day preside over this Church; and in connection with that I saw many things that President Smith would do; and when, last October, he stood before the congregations of the Saints, . . . I knew that all that the Lord had for President Smith to do had been done. That which I saw as a child was fulfilled, finished, completed” (in Conference Report, June 1919, 68).

As President of the Church, Joseph F. Smith continued the emphasis on tithing begun by President Lorenzo Snow and finally saw the Church free from debt. He issued doctrinal statements and was a great instrument in turning away hatred, bigotry, and persecution.

## As President of the Church, He Came Under Personal Attack [6.21]

After the crusade against plural marriage lessened, many men applied for and received amnesty. Joseph F. Smith was one of those men. By the time he became President of the Church in 1901, the persecutions of the late 19th century were a thing of the past. But the trials he would face were not yet over. An anti-Mormon political party was organized in Utah. This party launched a massive verbal attack against the prophet and the Church. The chief organ of this attack was the *Salt Lake Tribune*.

Vilified and lampooned in newspapers, maliciously lied about, the “Fighting Apostle” would not so much as write a letter in his own defense. “During these years [1905 to 1911] this newspaper almost daily cartooned President Joseph F. Smith with a spirit of wicked and malicious villification. These papers were scattered all over the United States, and naturally, appearing day by day and month after month, the people of the nation and even beyond the borders of the United States, reached the conclusion that the President of the Church, Joseph F. Smith, was the lowest and most despicable character in all the world. Missionaries out in the world were made to suffer and were persecuted and insulted in all parts of the earth. Yet during it all the Church continued to grow” (Smith, comp., *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, 350).

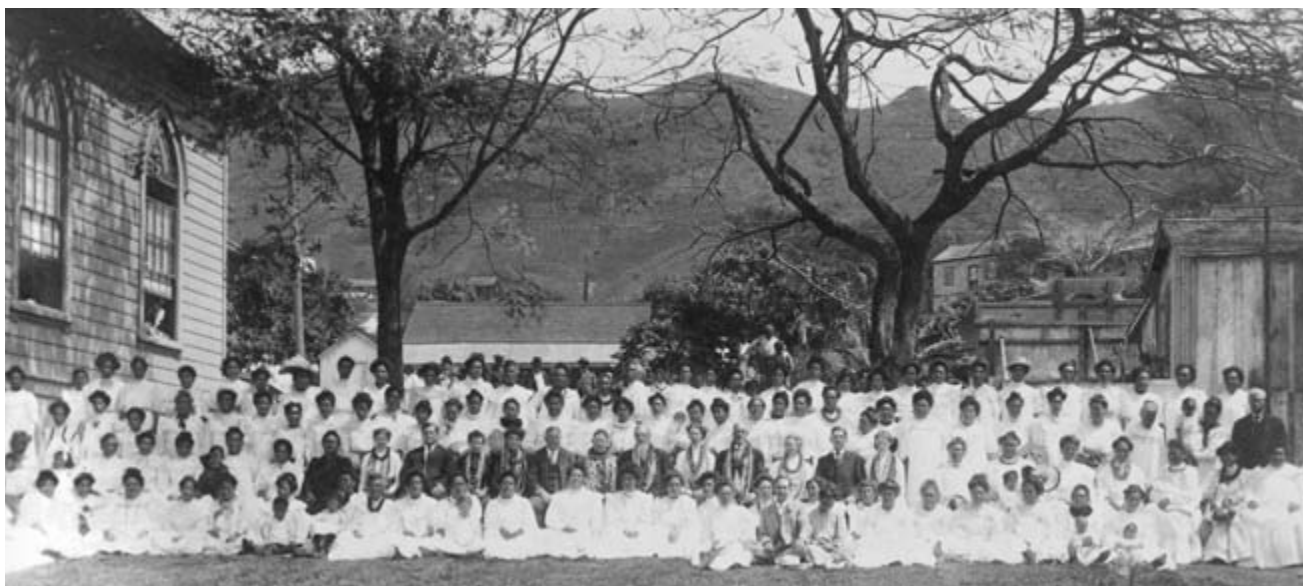
“Joseph F. Smith endured persecution, the revilings and ravings of the wicked, false accusations coming from the most contemptible and vilest creatures of the human family, and endured it all without a word of retaliation.



In 1906, President Smith and Charles W. Nibley of the Presiding Bishopric toured the European missions of the Church. It was the first time a President of the Church had visited Europe. President Smith returned to Europe in 1910 for a similar tour. He is shown in the lower left-hand corner of the photograph.

... He took the stand that if Joseph Smith could endure the abuse and vilification which was heaped upon him; if the Son of God could endure it and not return in kind, then he, too, as the humble servant of the Master, could endure in silence, for his fear was not in the arm of flesh but in the Lord, and the time must come when truth would triumph and the falsifier would sink into oblivion and be forgotten” (Smith, comp., *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, 439).

He insisted all must be forgiven. Truth would eventually dominate. Indeed it did. Upon his death, many of those who had been bitter enemies, enlightened by the purity and strictness of his life, wrote words of sorrow and praise.



President Smith in Hawaii, about 1909

## He Testified before Congress [6.22]

A chilly wind tugged at President Joseph F. Smith's overcoat as he mounted the steps to the senate chambers of the United States Capitol Building in March 1904. The responsibility he bore was ominous. Assembled in a large committee room were men of tremendous power and influence—United States senators. Their expressed purpose for meeting was to examine whether or not Reed Smoot, senator from Utah and an Apostle of the Church, would be allowed to retain his seat as a member of the Senate. But their real motive was far different.

Some of the senators making up the committee of investigation were bitterly hostile toward the Church. Only one of the 14 senators who comprised this committee would initially show any sympathy or concern. Most of the others wanted to use their influence to embarrass and defame the Church, its president, and its members.

President Smith was called to testify as the first witness. As he climbed the long steps he was fully aware of the real issue and its magnitude. It was not Reed Smoot who was on trial, but the Church. Newspapers across the country would carry reports of the hearings as front-page news. Many of these would be anxious to print anything that would put the Church in a bad light. Yet President Smith was confident.

How different was this tall prophet from the boy who, years before as a missionary to the Hawaiian Islands, had felt “as if I was so debased in my condition of poverty, lack of intelligence and knowledge . . . that I hardly dared look a white man in the face” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 542).

For three days President Joseph F. Smith testified before the Senate committee in defense of Reed Smoot. His sincerity, his openness, and his candor greatly affected some of the members of the committee. Misunderstanding and bigotry began to melt. Though there were those of anti-Mormon sentiment who testified against the Church, many of those called to testify actually told the Church's story. These



The First Presidency, 1901–10: John R. Winder, Joseph F. Smith, and Anthon H. Lund



Laie Hawaii Temple site. President Smith visited the Hawaiian Islands four times during his administration. While visiting in 1915, he selected and dedicated this site for the temple at Laie, Oahu. Pictured is a meetinghouse that was begun in 1882. The temple was dedicated in 1919, one year after President Smith's death.

testimonies were recorded by the press and many people, for the first time, read and understood the Church's views and teachings. Everywhere attitudes began to change, and the Church gained acceptance. President Smith's testimony would require more than 200 pages in the official record.

**Bishop Charles W. Nibley** related a discussion he had with President Smith concerning his appearance before the Congress:

“I recall one night we were on shipboard returning from Europe, in 1906. It was a bright moonlight night, and we stood there leaning over the railing enjoying the smooth sea and balmy summer night air. The Smoot investigation, which had just occurred a little while before and which had stirred up so much controversy throughout the land was fresh in our minds, and we were talking of it. I took the position that it would be unwise for Reed Smoot to be re-elected to the United States Senate. I was conscientious in my objection, and I had marshaled all the facts, arguments, and logic, that I could; and I was well informed, I thought, on the subject, and had presented them to him in as clear and yet in as adroit a manner as I possibly could. It would take too much space here to go over the arguments, but it seemed to me that I had the best of it. I could see he began to listen with some little impatience, and yet he let me have my say, but he answered in tones and in a way that I shall never forget. Bringing his fist down with some force on the railing

between us, he said, in the most forceful and positive manner:

“‘If ever the Spirit of the Lord has manifested to me anything clear and plain and positive, it is this, that Reed Smoot should remain in the United States Senate. He can do more good there than he can anywhere else.’

“Of course, I did not contend further with him, but accepted from that hour his view of the case and made it mine, too. Twelve years have passed since that time, and looking back on it now, I cannot help but think how marvelously and splendidly the inspiration of the Almighty has been vindicated, while my argument, facts and logic have all fallen to the ground” (*Improvement Era*, Jan. 1919, 195).

Reed Smoot served in the United States Senate for 30 years.

## He Identified Three Dangers That the Church Faces [6.23]

**President Joseph F. Smith** warned:

“There are at least three dangers that threaten the Church within, and the authorities need to awaken to the fact that the people should be warned unceasingly against them. As I see these, they are flattery of prominent men in the world, false educational ideas, and sexual impurity. . . .

“... The third subject mentioned—personal purity, is perhaps of greater importance than either of the other two. We believe in one standard of morality for men and women. If purity of life is neglected, all other dangers set in upon us like the rivers of waters when the flood gates are opened” (“Three Threatening Dangers,” *Improvement Era*, Mar. 1914, 476–77).



In Washington, D.C., lobbying for Utah's statehood in the 1890s



The First Presidency, 1910: Anthon H. Lund, Joseph F. Smith, and John H. Smith

## He Stressed the Need for Moral Cleanliness [6.24]

In an article that **President Joseph F. Smith** wrote for and at the request of the Newspaper Enterprise Association of San Francisco, California, he declared:

“No more loathsome cancer disfigures the body and soul of society today than the frightful affliction of sexual sin. It vitiates the very fountains of life, and bequeaths its foul effects to the yet unborn as a legacy of death. It lurks in hamlet and city, in the mansion and in the hovel as a ravening beast in wait for prey; and it skulks through the land in blasphemous defiance of the laws of God and man.

“The lawful association of the sexes is ordained of God, not only as the sole means of race perpetuation, but for the development of the higher faculties and nobler traits of human nature, which the love-inspired companionship of man and woman alone can insure. . . .

“Sexual union is lawful in wedlock, and, if participated in with the right intent is honorable and sanctifying. *But without the bonds of marriage, sexual indulgence is a debasing sin, abominable in the sight of Deity.* . . .

“Like many bodily diseases, sexual crime drags with itself a train of other ills. As the physical effects of drunkenness entail the deterioration of tissue, and disturbance of vital functions, and so render the body receptive to any distemper to which it may be exposed, and at the same time lower the powers of resistance even to fatal deficiency, so does unchastity expose the soul to divers spiritual maladies, and rob it of both resistance and recuperative ability. The adulterous generation of Christ's day were deaf to the voice of truth, and through their diseased state of mind and heart, sought after signs and preferred empty fable to the message of salvation” (“Unchastity the Dominant Evil of the Age,” *Improvement Era*, June 1917, 739, 742–43).



Joseph F. Smith

## He Lived in Close Communion with the Spirit of the Lord [6.25]

Bishop Charles W. Nibley wrote:

"As we were returning from an eastern trip, some years ago, on the train just east of Green River, I saw him go out to the end of the car on the platform, and immediately return and hesitate a moment, and then sit down in the seat just ahead of me. He had just taken his seat when something went wrong with the train. A broken rail had been the means of ditching the engine and had thrown most of the cars off the track. In the sleeper we were shaken up pretty badly, but our car remained on the track.

"The President immediately said to me that he had gone on the platform when he heard a voice saying, 'Go in and sit down.'

"He came in, and I noticed him stand a moment, and he seemed to hesitate, but he sat down.

"He said further that as he came in and stood in the aisle he thought, 'Oh, pshaw, perhaps it is only my imagination;' when he heard the voice again, 'Sit down,' and he immediately took his seat, and the result was as I have stated.

"He, no doubt, would have been very seriously injured had he remained on the platform of that car, as the cars were all jammed up together pretty badly. He said, 'I have heard that voice a good many times in my life, and I have always profited by obeying it.' . . .

"He lived in close communion with the Spirit of the Lord, and his life was so exemplary and chaste that the Lord could easily manifest himself to his servant. Truly he could say 'Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth.' Not every servant can hear when He speaks. But the heart of President Smith was attuned to the Celestial melodies—he could hear, and did hear" (*Improvement Era*, Jan. 1919, 197–98).

## He Had a Vision of the Redemption of the Dead [6.26]

During the last months of his life, the veil was very thin and he was in continuous communication with the Spirit. On October 4, 1918, in the opening discourse to his last general conference, one month before he died, **President Joseph F. Smith** declared: "I will not, I dare not, attempt to enter upon many things that are resting upon my mind this morning, and I shall postpone until some future time, the Lord being willing, my attempt



President Smith in the Sacred Grove, 1905

to tell you some of the things that are in my mind, and that dwell in my heart. I have not lived alone these five months. I have dwelt in the spirit of prayer, of supplication, of faith and of determination; and I have had my communication with the Spirit of the Lord continuously" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1918, 2).

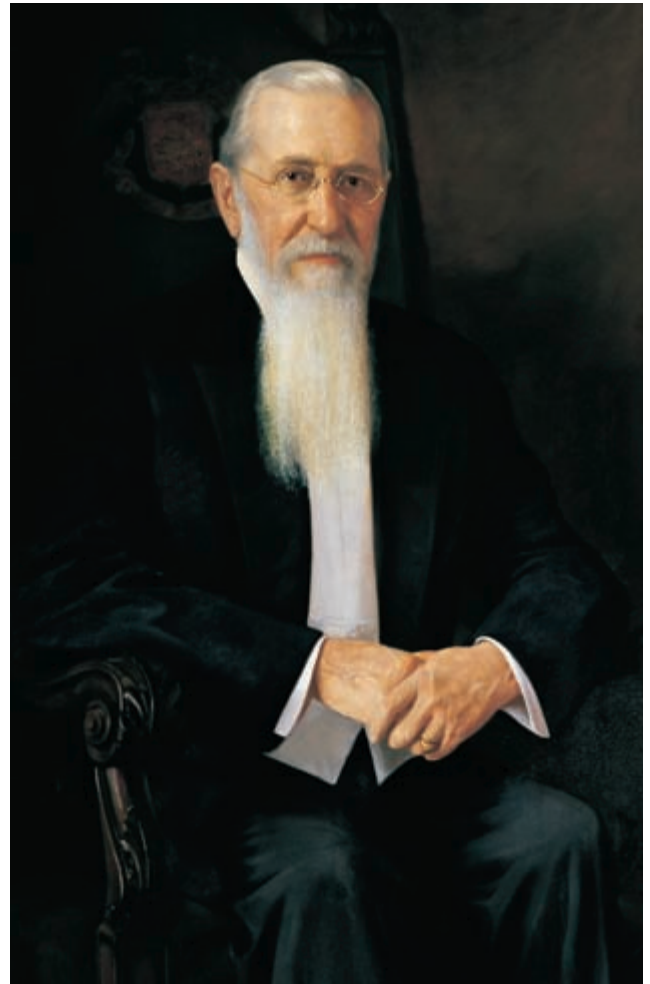
The day before, October 3, 1918, the heavens were opened and he beheld a vision of the redemption of the dead, wherein he saw the ministry of the Lord in the spirit world. This great revelation is now included in the Doctrine and Covenants as section 138.

## He Triumphed Over His Trials and Tribulations [6.27]

President Joseph F. Smith's life drew to a close on November 19, 1918. His life had not been easy, yet his character, temperament, and faith were such that he was not overcome by the trials he faced. Those trials helped refine him so that he could behold and reveal those things of the Spirit that the Lord needed made known to His children.

**Elder James E. Talmage**, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, declared: "I do bear witness to you that Joseph F. Smith was one of the real apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. I have listened to his ringing words of testimony and warning before the assemblies of thousands, and I have sat with him, on very rare occasions, alone; and on occasions less rare, but still not common, with my brethren and associates, I have heard him preach in conversation, and I have never seen his face so enlightened nor his frame so thrilled with power as when he was bearing testimony of the Christ. He seemed to me to know Jesus Christ as a man knows his friend" (in Conference Report, June 1919, 59).

In greatness, Joseph F. Smith served and led the Church. He refused to let adversity canker his soul or diminish his love. With humble endurance came power; the veil drew thin, and he was permitted to see the Savior, the spirit world, and the things of God. To the end of his life he bore a fervent witness of Christ, whose servant he was.



President Joseph F. Smith



# Heber J. Grant

## Seventh President of the Church



### Highlights in the Life of Heber J. Grant

Age	Events
	He was born November 22, 1856, in Salt Lake City, Utah, to Jedediah M. and Rachel Ridgeway Ivins Grant; his father died when Heber was nine days old.
15	He was ordained a Seventy (1871); he began a career as a bank clerk (1871).
20	He married Lucy Stringham (Nov. 1, 1877); she died in 1893.
23	He became stake president of the Tooele Stake (Oct. 30, 1880).
25	He was ordained an Apostle (Oct. 16, 1882).
26–27	He served a mission to the Native American Indians (1883–84).
28	He married Augusta Winters and Emily Wells (1884); Emily died in 1908.
33	The Manifesto ending plural marriage (Official Declaration 1) was issued (1890).
40	He became a candidate for governor of the state of Utah (1896); he later voluntarily withdrew.
41	He became a member of the General Superintendency of YMMIA (Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Association; 1897).
45	He opened and presided over the Japanese Mission (1901–3).
47–49	He presided over the British and European missions (1904–6).
58–62	World War I was being fought (1914–18).
60	He became President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (Nov. 23, 1916).
62	He became President of the Church (Nov. 23, 1918).
63	He dedicated the Laie Hawaii Temple (Nov. 27, 1919).
67	He dedicated the Cardston Alberta Temple (Aug. 26, 1923); he spoke on the first radio broadcast of general conference (1923).
70	The Church purchased the Hill Cumorah and the Whitmer Farm (1926).
71	He dedicated the Mesa Arizona Temple (Oct. 23, 1927).
79	The Church welfare plan was established (1936).
80	He visited missions in Europe (June–Sept. 1937).
83	Missionaries were withdrawn from Europe as World War II began (1939).
85	He called the first Assistants to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (Apr. 6, 1941).
88	He died in Salt Lake City, Utah (May 14, 1945); World War II ended (Sept. 2, 1945).

## He Grew Up in the Salt Lake Valley [7.1]

Heber Jeddy Grant was born November 22, 1856, during a time when Latter-day Saints were arguably less popular with other Americans than they had ever been. The fact that this negative feeling began to change significantly during President Grant's life was largely the result of his personal efforts to improve the public perception of the Church.

When Heber was nine days old, his father, Jedediah Morgan Grant, died. Because Heber was a frail baby and his mother was left in poverty, many predicted that he would not long survive. However, the Lord had other plans.

By the time Heber J. Grant was nine, the United States Civil War was over. President Abraham Lincoln had established Fort Douglas and had sent troops into Utah on a permanent basis. Heber probably saw Union soldiers pass by his home, half a block south of the Salt Lake temple block.



**Jedediah M. Grant, Heber J. Grant's father, died nine days after Heber was born.**



**Young Heber J. Grant, about 1860. It was the custom of that day to dress young boys in dresses for photographs.**

A more common sight to Heber would have been the fine horses and carriages of Brigham Young, George Q. Cannon, Daniel H. Wells, and other successful men of the Church and in business in the bustling frontier town. He must have watched freighters going north toward Ogden and south toward Provo, pulled by teams of horses, mules, or oxen. There would have been short trips to Temple

Square to check the progress of the construction of the Tabernacle and the temple. The new Salt Lake Theatre was just around the block.

Much of Heber's time was spent playing in streets and in yards. He played marbles skillfully, often winning enough marbles to use them as pay to get his friends to do his chores so that he could spend more time practicing pitching a baseball. And, of course, there was school.

His best friends were Feramorz L. and Richard W. Young, a son and a grandson of President Brigham Young. Together they ran into the Lion House when the prayer bell rang and joined in the Young family's prayers. Sometimes young Heber peeked to see if President Young was talking face to face with Heavenly Father because his prayers sounded as though he must have been. In addition to the prayers, Heber sometimes attended Brigham Young's school. There were long talks with President Young, Eliza R. Snow, and with Eliza's relative Erastus Snow, whom Heber regarded as an ideal Apostle. They told Heber about the Prophet Joseph Smith and about his father, Jedediah M. Grant, one of the most trusted of the Prophet's friends. His very name opened doors to Heber when he began to travel in business circles. These were potent influences in the life of this gifted child of destiny.

## Though Gifted, He Felt Inadequate [7.2]

Heber J. Grant was a person of great ability, yet many of his public statements reveal a sense of deep humility, if not inadequacy. He felt that he measured up to the goals he set for himself only by great determination and constant effort.

He lived in a time when leaders quite often expressed appreciation for learning, artistic talent, professional success, and other achievements dependent upon what usually are defined as talents or gifts. It was in these areas that he struggled the hardest. His talents lay in the field of business and social success. These talents often escaped notice, even though they may have been more important. His strengths helped carry him over all obstacles.



**The Grants' home on Main Street in Salt Lake City**



Photo courtesy of Bertram T. and Jean C. Willis

**Territorial baseball champions.** The Red Stocking baseball team in August 1877. They defeated teams in Utah, California, Colorado, and Wyoming to win the championship. Heber J. Grant is in the center of the second row.

## He Worked toward Excellence as an Athlete [7.3]

The following story that **President Heber J. Grant** shared about his youth illustrates his determination to overcome obstacles:

“Being an only child, my mother reared me very carefully. Indeed, I grew more or less on the principle of a hothouse plant, the growth of which is ‘long and lanky’ but not substantial. I learned to sweep, and to wash and wipe dishes, but did little stone throwing and little indulging in those sports which are interesting and attractive to boys, and which develop their physical frames. Therefore, when I joined a baseball club, the boys of my own age and a little older played in the first nine; those younger than I played in the second, and those still younger in the third, and I played with them.

“One of the reasons for this was that I could not throw the ball from one base to the other. Another reason was that I lacked physical strength to run or bat well. When I picked up a ball, the boys would generally shout:

“‘Throw it here, sissy!’

“So much fun was engendered on my account by my youthful companions that I solemnly vowed that I would play baseball in the nine that would win the championship of the Territory of Utah.

“My mother was keeping boarders at the time for a living, and I shined their boots until I saved a dollar which I invested in a baseball. I spent hours and hours throwing the ball at Bishop Edwin D. Woolley’s barn, which caused him to refer to me as the laziest boy in the Thirteenth Ward. Often my arm would ache so that I could scarcely go to sleep at night. But I kept on practicing and finally

succeeded in getting into the second nine of our club. Subsequently I joined a better club, and eventually played in the nine that won the championship of the territory and beat the nine that had won the championship for California, Colorado, and Wyoming. Having thus made good my promise to myself, I retired from the baseball arena” (*Gospel Standards*, comp. G. Homer Durham [1969], 342–43).

## His Determination Was Encouraged by a Wise Mother [7.4]

In an address during funeral services for President Heber J. Grant, **President David O. McKay**, then a counselor in the First Presidency, said:

“Early in his youth there was developed in his young soul a spirit of independence and determination that later made him outstanding among his associates. . . . In the humble surroundings and spiritual atmosphere of his boyhood home were formed those sterling traits of character which in maturity made him so distinguished.

“President Grant always spoke with deference and heartfelt appreciation of his noble inheritance from both his parents. . . .

“Deprived of a father’s companionship, President Grant appreciated all the more deeply the transforming power of a mother’s love. It was she who changed his timidity to courage; his self-depreciation to self-confidence; impetuosity to self-control; lack of initiative to perseverance” (“President Heber J. Grant,” *Improvement Era*, June 1945, 334).



Heber J. Grant and his mother, Rachel Ridgeway Ivins Grant

## He Was Deeply Affected by the Sacrifices of His Family [7.5]

**President Heber J. Grant** said: “I have never heard and never expect to hear, to the day of my death, my favorite hymn: ‘Come, come, ye Saints, no toil nor labor fear, But with joy wend your way,’ but what I think of the death and the burial of my little baby sister, and the wolves digging up her body on the plains; but what I think of the death of my father’s first wife, and the bringing of her body here for burial, from Echo Canyon; but what



A youthful Heber J. Grant

I think of others that I know of, who laid down their lives; but what I think of that wonderful journey of Brigham Young and his band of Pioneers, those who followed him, and my heart goes out in gratitude beyond all the power with which God has given me to express it, that my father and my mother were among those who were true to God, and who made those sacrifices for

the conviction of their hearts, because of the knowledge that they had that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, and that Joseph Smith is his Prophet" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1922, 13).

## He Never Forgot the Sacredness of Family Responsibility [7.6]

**President Heber J. Grant** wrote of an experience that taught the importance of being self-sufficient and of taking care of family:

"Referring to that wonderful mother of mine, I remember that one day we had at least a half dozen, if not more, buckets on the floor catching the rain that came through the roof. It was raining very heavily, and Bishop Edwin D. Woolley came into the house, and he said:

"'Why, Widow Grant, this will never do. I shall take some of the money from the fast offerings to put a new roof on this house.'

"'Oh, no, you won't,' said mother. 'No relief money will ever put a roof on my house. I have sewing here.' (She



Rachel Grant's sewing box. She sewed for hire in order to provide food and clothing for herself and young Heber.

supported herself and me with a needle and thread for many years; later with a Wheeler and Wilcox sewing machine. . . .)

"Mother said, 'When I get through with this sewing that I am now doing, I will buy some shingles and patch the holes, and this house will take care of me until my son gets to be a man and builds a new one for me.'

"The bishop went away and said he was very sorry for Widow Grant, that if she waited for that boy to build a house she would never have one, for he was the laziest boy in the whole Thirteenth Ward. He went on to tell that I wasted my time throwing a ball across the fence behind the house hour after hour, day after day, and week after week, at his adobe barn.

"Thank the Lord for a mother who was a general as well as a Latter-day Saint; who realized that it was a remarkable and splendid thing to encourage a boy to do something besides perhaps milking cows if he was on a farm, if he had ambitions along athletic lines" (*Gospel Standards*, 343–44).

## He Was Challenged to Read the Book of Mormon [7.7]

**President Heber J. Grant** wrote about his experience in first reading the Book of Mormon:

"I can remember very distinctly when Uncle Anthony Ivins . . . said to me and to his son, Anthony C. Ivins:

"'Heber, Anthony, have you read the Book of Mormon?'

"We answered, 'No.'

"He said, 'I want you to read it. I want you to pledge to me that you will not skip a word, and to the one who reads it first, I will give a pair of ten dollar buckskin gloves with beaver tops.'

"Any boy of fourteen who had a pair of those gloves thought he was 'it.' I remember that my mother had urged me to read systematically the Book of Mormon, but I had not done it. I determined to read the book, say, twenty-five pages a day and get the benefit of its contents. I believed its contents were true because my mother and many others had told me so; and because of the testimony of the teacher of the class that Richard W. Young and I attended, I thought that to win the gloves I would have to read the book so rapidly that I would get no benefit; and therefore decided to let Anthony win the gloves.

"I met my cousin, Anthony C., the next morning, and he asked, 'How many pages have you read?'

"I said: 'I have read twenty-five pages.'

"He said: 'I have read over one hundred and fifty. I sat up until after midnight.'

"I said: 'Good-bye gloves.'

"I went on reading twenty-five pages a day and occasionally I got so interested that I read fifty or seventy-five pages, and, lo and behold, I got through first and got the gloves. He got such a good start he did not bother to read any more until after I got through with the book" (*Gospel Standards*, 350–51).

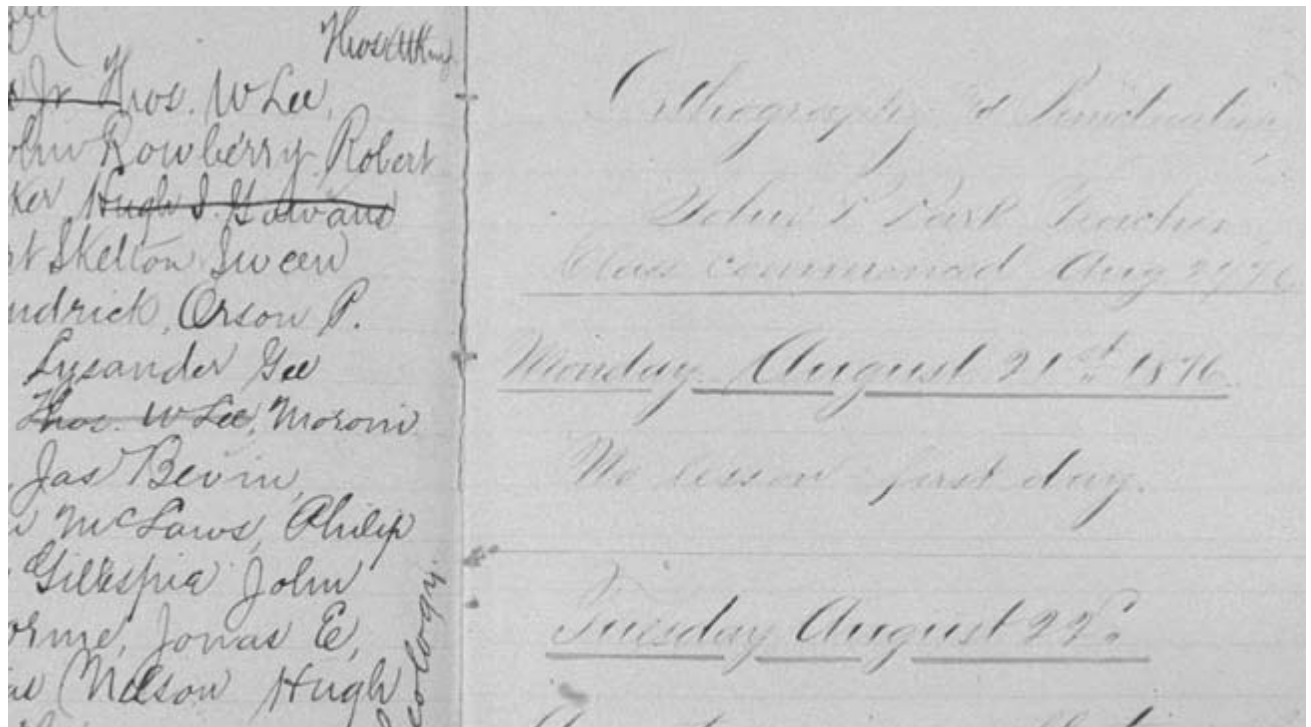
## His Penmanship Improved from "Hen Tracks" to the Best in Utah [7.8]

"One day Heber was playing marbles with some other boys when the bookkeeper from the Wells Fargo Company Bank was walking down the other side of the street. One of the boys remarked, 'That man gets \$150.00 a month.' Heber figured to himself that not counting Sundays, that man made \$6.00 a day and that at five cents a pair, he would have to black 120 pairs of boots to make \$6.00. He there and then resolved that some day he would be a bookkeeper in the Wells Fargo and Company's bank. In those days all the records and accounts of the bank were written with a pen, and one of the requisites of a good bookkeeper was the ability to write well. To learn to write well was his first approach to

securing this job and the fulfilment of his resolve; so he set to work to become a penman.

"At the beginning his penmanship was so poor that when two of his chums were looking at it one said to the other, 'That writing looks like hen tracks.' 'No,' said the other, 'it looks as if lightning had struck an ink bottle.' This touched Heber's pride and, bringing his fist down on his desk, he said, 'I'll some day be able to give you fellows lessons in penmanship.' . . .

"He secured a position as bookkeeper and policy clerk in an insurance office at fifteen. About this he said: 'I wrote a very nice hand, and that was all that was needed to satisfactorily fill the position which I then had. Yet I was not fully satisfied but continued to dream and scribble when not otherwise occupied. . . . I learned to write well, so well, that I often made more before and after office hours by writing cards, invitations, and making maps than the amount of my regular salary. At nineteen I was keeping books and acting as policy clerk for Henry Wadsworth, the agent of Wells Fargo and Company. My time was not fully employed, and I was not working for the company but for the agent personally. I did the same as I had done in Mr. White's bank, volunteered to file a lot of bank letters, etc., and kept a set of books for the Sandy Smelting Company, which Mr. Wadsworth was doing personally. My actions so pleased Mr. Wadsworth that he employed me to do the collecting for Wells Fargo



Sample of Heber J. Grant's handwriting

and Company and paid me \$20.00 a month for this work in addition to my regular compensation of \$75.00 from the insurance business. Thus I was in the employ of Wells Fargo and Company and one of my day-dreams had become a reality' " (Bryant S. Hinckley, *Heber J. Grant: Highlights in the Life of a Great Leader* [1951], 39–42).

"When Heber, still in his teens, was working as a policy clerk in the office of H. R. Mann and Co., he was offered three times his salary to go to San Francisco as a penman. He later became teacher of penmanship and bookkeeping at the University of Deseret (University of Utah). . . .

"At one of the territorial fairs in which he had not competed, he noticed the exhibits of four professional penmen. He remarked to the man in charge of the art department that he could write better than that before he was seventeen years of age. The man in charge laughed and said that nobody but a cheeky insurance agent would make such a remark. He handed the gentleman three dollars which was the fee necessary to compete for a diploma and sent for the specimen which he had written before he was seventeen and hung it up with the remark, 'If you judges know good penmanship, when you see it, I will get the diploma.' He walked away with a diploma for the best penmanship in the territory. He encouraged the art of good penmanship among the youth of Zion and offered many prizes for the best specimens" (Hinckley, *Heber J. Grant*, 40–41).

### He Was Determined to Learn to Sing [7.9]

As with baseball and penmanship, **Heber J. Grant** was determined to learn to sing, despite the negative opinions of others. Years of practicing brought moderate success. He wrote:

"My mother tried to teach me when I was a small child to sing but failed because of my inability to carry a tune.

"Upon joining a singing class taught by Professor Charles J. Thomas, he tried and tried in vain to teach me when ten years of age to run the scale or carry a simple tune and finally gave up in despair. He said that I could never, in this world, learn to sing. Perhaps he thought I might learn the divine art in another world. Ever since this attempt, I have frequently tried to sing when riding alone many miles from anyone who might hear me, but on such occasions could never succeed in carrying the tune of one of our familiar hymns for a single verse, and quite frequently not for a single line.

"When I was about twenty-five years of age, Professor Sims informed me that I could sing, but added, 'I would like to be at least forty miles away while you are doing it.' . . .



"I have learned to sing."

"Upon my recent trip to Arizona, I asked Elders Rudger Clawson and J. Golden Kimball if they had any objections to my singing one hundred hymns that day. They took it as a joke and assured me that they would be delighted. We were on the way from Holbrook to St. Johns, a distance of about sixty miles. After I had sung about forty tunes, they assured me that if I sang the remaining sixty they would be sure to have nervous prostration. I paid no attention whatever to their appeal, but held them to their bargain and sang the full one hundred. One hundred and fifteen songs in one day, and four hundred in four days, is the largest amount of practicing I ever did.

"Today [1900] my musical deafness is disappearing, and by sitting down to a piano and playing the lead notes, I can learn a song in less than one-tenth the time required when I first commenced to practice" (*Gospel Standards*, 351–52, 354).

### He Married Lucy Stringham [7.10]

"Once his business career was underway, Heber began to focus his attention on more distant career goals as well as on other intimate, personal goals that had been simmering in his consciousness for years. In his reminiscences he provides us with this insight into the process and scope of his goal setting: 'I promised myself when I was a young man that I would be married before I was twenty-one if I could persuade some good girl to marry me, so that I would start out as a full-fledged man when I reached my majority. . . . At the same time that I made this promise, I mapped out my life until I was thirty-odd years of age, and made up my mind as to the things that I was going to try to accomplish'" (Francis M. Gibbons, *Heber J. Grant: Man of Steel, Prophet of God* [1979], 27–28).

Heber was determined to achieve all the goals he had set for himself. He determined that he had weak social skills and set out to improve himself. Dancing was a challenge, but eventually became one of his favorite activities. He even helped organized dances and used these opportunities to search for a wife. As he dated, he became interested in Emily Wells, the daughter of Daniel H. Wells, a prominent leader in the Church. They had much in common and it appeared that they might marry. They discovered, however, that they disagreed about the practice of plural marriage. Heber had come from a family that had practiced it and was surprised at some of the sarcastic comments Emily made about it. He asked the Lord in prayer about continuing to pursue Emily's affections and was surprised by the negative answer he strongly received. He shed some very bitter tears because he had admired her so deeply. But then his attentions were drawn to Lucy Stringham (see Gibbons, *Heber J. Grant*, 29–31).

"Heber's first overtures to Lucy were met with a response that could hardly be called enthusiastic. He started by walking her home from Sunday evening meetings, a frequently used courting device of the day. It was customary, however, for the young lady to invite her escort to join her in the family sitting room, where they could engage in serious or flirtatious talk and perhaps enjoy some refreshments, all under the careful scrutiny of the girl's parents. Sunday after Sunday, however, instead of receiving a hoped-for invitation into the Stringham sitting room, Heber received a somewhat indifferent, even chilly, 'good night' at Stringham's gate. That he was not deterred by this unencouraging treatment is still another evidence of Heber J. Grant's characteristic perseverance.

"The turning point in this tepid courtship occurred one Sunday evening when Rodney C. Badger walked past the Stringham's gate just as Heber received his customary 'good night' from Lucy. As these two friends walked together to the corner, Heber, instead of turning south toward his home, told Rodney, 'I'm going down to Wells corner and visit with some of the girls there.'

"Shocked at what he interpreted as fickleness, Rodney chided Heber for leaving one girl only to go in search of other female companionship. Rodney appeared satisfied, however, when Heber explained Lucy's distant attitude toward him.

"Whether Rodney planted a seed in Lucy's mind or mere chance intervened, the very next Sunday Heber received an invitation into the Stringham sitting room, where he became almost a fixture until the time of his marriage to Lucy a few months later. It turned out that Lucy's initial reluctance came not from a lack of feeling for the great

man she was later to marry, but from the false notion that she was merely a temporary substitute for Emily Wells.

"Once the ice was broken and Lucy realized that Heber had matrimony in view, their courtship sped toward its inevitable culmination. They were married in the St. George Temple on November 1, 1877, three weeks prior to Heber's twenty-first birthday" (Gibbons, *Heber J. Grant*, 32–33).

Later, in 1884, with Lucy's full approval, Heber was sealed to Hulda Augusta Winters and Emily Wells.



Heber and Lucy Grant and family on their 10th wedding anniversary, 1887

## He Added Faith in God to His Determination and Overcame His Weaknesses [7.11]

**President Heber J. Grant** told the following experience from his life:

"Before I was twenty-four I was made the president of the Tooele Stake of Zion. I announced in a speech that lasted seven and a half minutes that I would ask no man in Tooele to be a more honest tithe payer than I would be; that I would ask no man to give more of his means in



Heber J. Grant and his family, 1892

proportion to what he had than I would give; I would ask no man to live the Word of Wisdom better than I would live it, and I would give the best that was in me for the benefit of the people in that stake of Zion.

"That night I heard in the dark a man say in a contemptuous way: 'It is a pity if the General Authorities have to send a man out here to preside, . . . that they could not have sent one with sense enough to talk at least ten minutes; and that they had to send a boy to preside over us.'

"When I heard this, I remember thinking: 'The boy is the only one who has any right to complain.' . . . However, I was not able during the next three or four Sundays to talk as long as I did the first one. I ran out of ideas in five, six, and six and a half minutes.

"At the lunch table after my first short speech which lasted seven and a half minutes, President Smith said: 'Heber, you said you believe the gospel with all your heart, and propose to live it, but you did not bear your testimony that you know it is true. Don't you know absolutely that this gospel is true?'

"I answered: 'I do not.'

"'What, you! a president of a stake?' said President Joseph F. Smith.

"'That is what I said.'

"'President [John] Taylor, I am in favor of undoing this afternoon what we did this morning. I do not think any man should preside over a stake who has not a perfect and abiding knowledge of the divinity of this work.'

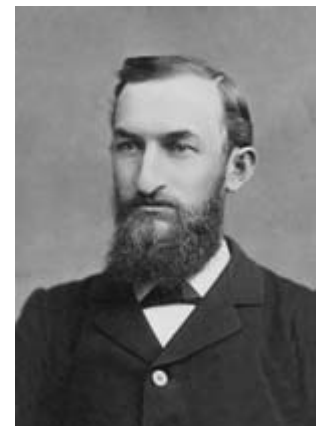
"I said: 'I am not going to complain.'

"Brother Taylor had a habit, when something pleased him excessively, of shaking his body and laughing. He said, 'Joseph, Joseph, Joseph, he knows it just as well as you do. The only thing that he does not know is that he does know it. It will be but a short time until he does know it. He leans over backwards. You do not need to worry.'

"I went to the little town of Vernon in Tooele County, took two others with me to do the preaching, and I got up to say a few words and spoke for forty-five minutes with perfect ease under the inspiration of the Lord. That night I shed tears of gratitude to the Lord for the abiding, perfect, and absolute testimony that came into my life of the divinity of this work.

"The next Sunday after speaking at Vernon, I was at Grantsville. I told the Lord I would like to talk forty-five minutes. I got up to speak and ran out of ideas in five minutes, and I was sweating.

"After the meeting I walked out past the farthest house in the west part of Grantsville, I am sure nearly three miles, and I got down behind a haystack and I shed some more tears. But they were tears of humiliation. I made a pledge to God there upon that occasion that never again in my life would I stand up before an audience with the feeling that all I needed to do was just stand up and talk; but that I would get up upon all occasions with a desire to say something that might be of benefit to the people to whom I spoke, and not with the spirit of pride, such as I had that day when I stood up in Grantsville. And I have never failed from that day until now—fifty-odd years ago—to have any desire in my heart when speaking except that I might say or read something that would be of lasting benefit to those who listened to my voice" (*Gospel Standards*, 191–93).



Heber J. Grant was called to be a stake president when he was 23 and an Apostle when he was 25.



Photo courtesy of Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, Tooele, Utah

Elder Heber J. Grant with other General Authorities and Church members attending a funeral service at the Grantsville First Ward Chapel, September 1892.

## He Was Willing to Sacrifice [7.12]

**Heber J. Grant** sought to always follow the counsel of the Lord's servants: "I have never seen the day since I became the president of Tooele Stake of Zion, at the time I was not yet twenty-four years of age, when I did not want to know what the president of the Church wanted, and what the leading officials of the Church wanted me to do, and that I did not want to do whatever they would have me to do, no matter what my personal likes or dislikes might be. I have sacrificed my own financial prospects to a great extent, among the prospects being the one this dear friend of mine offered me [Colonel A. G. Hawes], a little job of forty thousand dollars a year when the Church was making me an allowance in tithing office orders of three thousand six hundred dollars" (*Gospel Standards*, 200–201).

## His Faith in God Gave Him Confidence [7.13]

**Heber J. Grant** believed that the Lord would bless us in many ways as we did our duty:

"I remember as a young man I had \$50.00 in my pocket on one occasion which I intended to deposit in the bank. When I went on Thursday morning to fast meeting—the fast meeting used to be held on Thursdays instead of Sundays—and the bishop made an appeal for a donation, I walked up and handed him the \$50.00. He took five of it and put it in the drawer and gave the \$45.00 back to me and said that was my full share.

"I said, 'Bishop Woolley, by what right do you rob me of putting the Lord in my debt? Didn't you preach here today that the Lord rewards fourfold? My mother is a widow, and she needs \$200.00.'

"He said, 'My boy, do you believe that if I take this other \$45.00, you will get your \$200.00 quicker?'

"I said: 'Certainly.'

"Well, he took it.

"While walking from fast meeting to the place where I worked, an idea popped into my head. I sent a telegram to a man asking him how many bonds of a certain kind he would buy at a specified price within forty-eight hours and allow me to draw a draft on him through Wells Fargo's Bank. He was a man whom I did not know. I had never spoken to him in my life, but I had seen him a time or two on the streets of Salt Lake.

"He wired back that he wanted as many as I could get. My profit on that transaction was \$218.50.

"The next day I walked down to the bishop and said: 'Bishop, I made \$218.50 after paying that \$50.00 donation the other day and so I owe \$21.85 in tithing. I will have to dig up the difference between \$21.85 and \$18.50. The Lord did not quite give me the tithing in addition to a four to one increase.'

"Someone will say that it would have happened anyway. I do not think it would have happened. I do not think I would have had the idea. I do not think I would have sent the telegram.

"... I am a firm believer that the Lord opens up the windows of heaven when we do our duty financially and pours out upon us blessings of a spiritual nature, which are of far greater value than temporal things. But I believe he also gives us blessings of a temporal nature" (quoted in Hinckley, *Heber J. Grant*, 98–100).

## He Suffered the Deaths of Loved Ones [7.14]

Heber J. Grant was a beloved, attentive father and husband. He treated his wives and daughters as queens and princesses. His courtesy, generosity, and fairness were a constant source of joy to them. Yet, sickness and death in his family were some of his greatest trials. He lost his only two sons—one as a baby and the other as a young boy. His grief knew no bounds because he so wanted a son. Untimely deaths also took two of his three wives—Lucy three years after the Manifesto was issued and Emily years later. Great as his grief was, these events brought rewarding spiritual experiences that affirmed God's love and will concerning the losses of loved ones.



Heber J. Grant at an International Scout Jamboree in 1929

## He Had a Reputation for Honesty [7.15]

Heber J. Grant turned down an appointment to the Naval Academy and pursued business interests. He pursued them with vigor through good times and bad, through successes and reversals. He walked with such courage and well-earned credentials that not even his comparative youth stood in his way. The great financiers of Wall Street in Chicago and points west came to know that Heber J. Grant would never default.

By the time he became President of the Church, Heber had many friends in the world, whose admiration for his ability and integrity was so great that they simply took the position that nothing he had anything to do with could be the least bit dishonest or bad. **President Grant** wrote of one experience:

"I had a letter when I, as a young man, was made an apostle, from a nonmember of the Church. . . . Of prominence in the world so far as business affairs are concerned, he was the manager of a great corporation. . . . He said: 'I never thought very much of the leaders of the Mormon people, in fact I thought they were a very bright, keen, designing lot of fellows, getting rich from the tithes that they gathered in from a lot of ignorant, superstitious, and over-zealous religious people. But now that you are one of the fifteen men at the head of the Mormon Church, I apologize to the other fourteen. I know that if there were anything crooked in the management of the Mormon Church you would give it all away'" (*Gospel Standards*, 70).

He took advantage of every opportunity to use his friendship to promote the Church. He was in great demand as a speaker and was honored by important nonmember groups and individuals. His subject was always the same—the story of his Church and people and their principles. He received standing ovations.

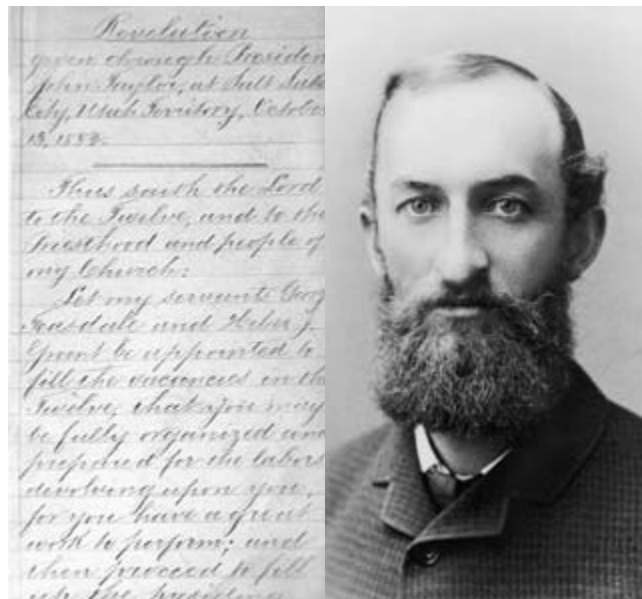
## He Was Called to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles [7.16]

President John Taylor called Heber J. Grant into the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles one month before Elder Grant's 26th birthday. Before this calling he held many positions in the Church, including general secretary of the YMMIA at the age of 23 and president of the Tooele Stake. It could be said that Heber J. Grant was an important link in the bridge over which the Church crossed from an old world of criticism and misunderstanding to a new world of guarded respect and some outright admiration and friendliness.

Heber J. Grant personally knew every individual who became President of the Church from President Brigham Young to President Gordon B. Hinckley. Among the General Authorities who were called by him are President Harold B. Lee, President Spencer W. Kimball, and President Ezra Taft Benson.

Heber felt inadequate when he was called to the apostleship and sought the Lord's confirmation. Once while out riding with a group he found an opportunity to be alone and reflect upon his call. **President Grant** later described his experience:

"As I was riding along to meet them . . . , I seemed to see, and I seemed to hear, what to me is one of the most real things in all my life. I seemed to hear the words that were spoken. I listened to the discussion with a great deal of interest. The First Presidency and the Quorum of the



A handwritten copy of the revelation President John Taylor received calling Heber J. Grant to the apostleship

Elder Grant during his early years as an Apostle

Twelve Apostles had not been able to agree on two men to fill the vacancies in the Quorum of the Twelve. There had been a vacancy of one for two years, and a vacancy of two for one year, and the conferences had adjourned without the vacancies' being filled. In this council the Savior was present, my father was there, and the Prophet Joseph Smith was there. They discussed the question that a mistake had been made in not filling those two vacancies and that in all probability it would be another six months before the Quorum would be completed. And they discussed as to whom they wanted to occupy those positions, and decided that the way to remedy the mistake that had been made in not filling these vacancies was to send a revelation. It was given to me that the Prophet Joseph Smith and my father mentioned me and requested that I be called to that position. I sat there and wept for joy. It was given to me that I had done nothing to entitle me to that exalted position, except that I had lived a clean, sweet life. It was given to me that because of my father's having practically sacrificed his life in what was known as the great reformation, so to speak, of the people in early days, having been practically a martyr, that the Prophet Joseph and my father desired me to have that position, and it was because of their faithful labors that I was called, and not because of anything I had done of myself or any great thing that I had accomplished. It was also given to me that that was all these men, the Prophet and my father, could do for me. From that day it depended upon me and upon me alone as to whether I made a success of my life or a failure" (*Gospel Standards*, 195–96).

## He Presided over Missions in Japan and England [7.17]

Teaching about times the Lord blessed him when he prayed to serve in certain positions, **Elder Heber J. Grant** told the youth of the Church:

"When in Japan, feeling that I was not accomplishing anything, I went out into the woods and got down on my knees and told the Lord that whenever He was through with me there, where I was accomplishing nothing, I would be very glad and thankful if He would call me home and send me to Europe to preside over the European missions. A few days after that a cable arrived: 'Come home on the first boat.' And I went home.

"Brother Joseph F. Smith said to me: 'Heber, I realize you have not accomplished anything in Japan. We sent you there for three years, and I want you to put in the other year in England, if you are willing.'

"I said, 'I am perfectly willing.'



Elder Grant (center) in Japan, 1902

"Later I went in to bid him goodbye and said: 'I will see you in a little over a year.'

"He said, 'Oh no, I have decided to make it a year and a half.'

"I said, 'All right, multiply it by two and do not say anything about it to me.' And he did.

"I want you young people to know that in all my labors I got nearer to the Lord, and accomplished more and had more joy while in the mission field than ever before or since. Man is that he may have joy, and the joy that I had in the mission field was superior to any I have ever experienced elsewhere. Get it into your hearts, young people, to prepare yourselves to go out into the world where you can get on your knees and draw nearer to the Lord than in any other labor" (*Gospel Standards*, 245–46).

## He Earned the Respect of Business Leaders [7.18]

"As a young man Heber J. Grant proceeded with boldness to play a large role in the economic history of his people. He was a pioneer in industry, second only to Brigham Young. Pioneering in industry requires much the same sturdy qualities that pioneering new lands requires: faith, vision, imagination, patience, and fortitude, backed by a determination that knows no failure. Heber J. Grant had all of these qualities.

"A boyhood associate, Heber M. Wells, said this of him: 'He has probably been instrumental in establishing and furthering the cause of more successful intermountain industries than any other man of his time. His personal credit, his unquestioned integrity, his super-salesmanship brought capital to the aid of the Church, the community, and private enterprises. In times of panic and in times of plenty Heber J. Grant has been able to raise a few dollars or millions where other men have failed to raise any amount. This has been done largely by his personal guarantee and persuasion. He has never repudiated



Heber J. Grant with wife Emily and family when he was president of the European Mission in 1905

or failed to pay a dollar of obligation for which he was directly or indirectly responsible, legally or morally, and the result is that today, as during all the many decades since he was a young man, he can walk into the offices of executives and directors of great financial institutions in America and be affectionately greeted by men who are proud to know him as a friend and a leader of financial industries'" (Hinckley, *Heber J. Grant*, 51–52).

### He Knew the Agony of Debt [7.19]

Heber J. Grant's daughter Lucy said: "During those lean years which followed the panic of 1893, when to raise a nickel was harder than it had been to give \$5.00, Father still helped those in distress. He knew the widow's lot; he had felt the pinch of poverty; he knew the bitterness and bondage of debt. Through all the dark hours of his life there was a shining and secure faith in God and his promises which sustained him. I know in those years the horror of financial obligation was borne into the souls of those of us who were old enough to see him under this great strain which made us feel that debt was like a huge dragon, into whose ugly mouth the very lifeblood of its victims was drawn. No wonder he was constantly crying unto the people everywhere to keep out of debt. One whose experiences have been such as his, knows the exquisite pain of honor when on the verge of being crushed, and of a good name when near being dragged into the dust" (quoted in Hinckley, *Heber J. Grant*, 206).

### He Was Honorable and Paid All of His Debts [7.20]

**President Heber J. Grant** taught the following about honoring our obligations to the Lord and to others:

"I have had friends beg and plead with me to take bankruptcy, saying that I would never live long enough to pay my debts.

"If there is any man living who is entitled to say, 'Keep out of debt,' his name is Heber J. Grant. Thank the Lord that I was able to pay it all, and pay it all without asking a dollar discount from anyone.

"I do not believe I ever would have paid it if I had not been absolutely honest with the Lord. When I made any money, the first debt I paid was to the Lord. And I believe beyond a shadow of a doubt, that if the Latter-day Saints as a people, had taken the advice of the prophet of the Lord, and had been efficient tithe payers they would not be in the condition they are today" (*Gospel Standards*, 59).

### Doctrine and Covenants 121 Was One of the Disciplines in His Life [7.21]

**Elder Heber J. Grant**, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught: "In talking to the Latter-day Saints, there is no revelation in all the Doctrine and Covenants that I have quoted from so often as that contained in Section 121 . . . : That 'No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the Priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness, and meekness, and by love unfeigned.' There is no danger of a Priesthood of this kind—gentleness, and meekness, and love unfeigned. But when we exercise the power of the Priesthood . . . to 'Gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control, or dominion, or compulsion, upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn,



Enjoying a favorite pastime



On a Hawaiian trip, about 1935. Heber J. Grant is in the front row, second from the left.

Amen to the Priesthood or the authority of that man.' These are the words of God" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1902, 80).

## His Definition of Success Was Simple and Practical [7.22]

**Elder Heber J. Grant** taught what true success is: "Not he who merely succeeds in making a fortune, and in so doing blunts the natural affections of the heart, and chases therefrom the love of his fellows, can be said to be truly successful: but he who so lives that those who know him best shall love him most; and that God, who knows not only his deeds, but also the inmost sentiments of his heart, shall love him; of such an one, only—notwithstanding he may die in poverty—can it be said indeed and of a truth, 'he should be crowned with the wreath of success'" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1911, 24).

## One of the Secrets of Success Is Service [7.23]

**President Heber J. Grant** wrote: "I am converted to the thought that the way to peace and happiness in life is by giving service. Service is the true key, I believe, to happiness, because when we perform labors like missionary work, all the rest of our lives we can look back upon our accomplishments in the mission field. When we perform any acts of kindness, they bring a feeling of satisfaction and pleasure into our hearts, while ordinary amusements pass away. We can't look back with any particular satisfaction upon having spent an evening just for the privilege of laughing loud and long" (*Gospel Standards*, 187).

## He Had a Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith [7.24]

**President Grant** said: "I have met hundreds of men who have said: 'If it were not for Joseph Smith I could accept your religion.' Any man who does not believe in Joseph Smith as a prophet of the true and the living God has no right to be in this Church. That revelation to Joseph Smith is the foundation stone. If Joseph Smith did not have that interview with God and Jesus Christ, the whole Mormon fabric is a failure and a fraud. It is not worth anything on earth. But God did come, God did introduce His Son; God did inspire that man to organize the Church of Jesus Christ, and all the opposition of the world is not able to withstand the truth. It is flourishing; it is growing, and it will grow more" (*Gospel Standards*, 15).



Near the north rim of the Grand Canyon

## The Welfare Plan Was Established upon Revealed Principles [7.25]

The Church welfare plan was based on God-given, immutable, moral and economic laws. **President Heber J. Grant** explained: "Our primary purpose was to set up, in so far as it might be possible, a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with, the evils of a dole abolished, and independence, industry, thrift and self respect be once more established amongst our people. The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves. Work is to be re-enthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1936, 3).

## The Church Welfare Plan Was Given through Inspiration [7.26]

**Elder Harold B. Lee**, then newly called as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, bore testimony of the welfare plan: “For the last five glorious, strenuous years, I have labored, under a call from the First Presidency, with a group of men in the development of and the unfolding of what we have called the Church Welfare Plan. I felt that I should bear my testimony to you concerning that work as I close. It was on April 20th, 1935, when I was called to the office of the First Presidency. That was a year before official announcement of the Welfare Plan was made in this Tabernacle. There, after an entire half day session, at which President Grant and President McKay were present, President Clark then being in the East—they had some communications with him, so that all members of the Presidency were in agreement—I was astounded to learn that for years there had been before them, as a result of their thinking and planning and as the result of the inspiration of Almighty God, the genius of the very plan that is being carried out and was in waiting and in preparation for a time when in their judgment the faith of the Latter-day Saints was such that they were willing to follow the counsel of the men who lead and preside in this Church” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1941, 120–21).

## He Taught about Welfare and the Word of Wisdom [7.27]

President Heber J. Grant included the Word of Wisdom as an important welfare principle. In fact, he mentioned it as a welfare principle almost as often as he mentioned the payment of tithing and the avoidance of debt. The Word of Wisdom can be recognized as a welfare principle because welfare is based on caring for oneself and on saving today’s resources for tomorrow’s use.



Visiting Holland, August 12, 1937



President Grant was chosen to speak during the first broadcast of radio station KZN in Salt Lake City on May 6, 1922.

**President Grant** taught: “I would like it known that if we as a people never used a particle of tea or coffee or of tobacco or of liquor, we would become one of the most wealthy people in the world. Why? Because we would have increased vigor of body, increased vigor of mind; we would grow spiritually; we would have a more direct line of communication with God, our Heavenly Father” (*Gospel Standards*, 50).

He also mentioned the large amounts of money wasted in treating the illnesses that were directly attributable to harmful substances, the loss of employment, the loss of production caused by hangovers and smoking and coffee breaks, and the accidents on the highways caused by drunken drivers and in industry by drunken employees.

## Payment of Tithes and Offerings Helps Overcome Selfishness [7.28]

**President Heber J. Grant** taught: “Some people have found it very hard to pay their tithing. The harder it is for an individual to comply with requirements of the Lord in the payment of his tithing, the greater the benefit when he finally does pay it. The Lord loves a generous giver. No man living upon the earth can pay donations for the poor, can pay for building meetinghouses and temples, academies, and universities, can take of his means and send his boys and girls to proclaim this gospel, without removing selfishness from his soul, no matter how selfish he was when he started in. That is one of the finest things in all the world for men—to get to that point where the selfishness in their natures is cured. When it is eradicated from their dispositions, they are glad and anxious and

willing and seeking the opportunity to do good with the means that the Lord places in their hands, instead of trying to get more of it" (*Gospel Standards*, 62).

## The Law of the Fast Is the Spiritual Foundation of the Welfare Plan [7.29]

**President Heber J. Grant** taught about the blessings of fasting:

"Let me promise you here today that if the Latter-day Saints will honestly and conscientiously from this day forth, as a people, keep the monthly fast and pay into the hands of their bishops the actual amount that they would have spent for food for the two [consecutive] meals from which they have refrained; and if in addition to that they will pay their honest tithing, it will solve all of the problems in connection with taking care of the Latter-day Saints. We would have all the money necessary to take care of all the idle and all the poor.

"Every living soul among the Latter-day Saints that fasts two meals once a month will be benefited spiritually and be built up in the faith of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ—benefited spiritually in a wonderful way—and sufficient means will be in the hands of the bishops to take care of all the poor" (*Gospel Standards*, 123).

## Tithing Is the Lord's Law of Financial Success [7.30]

**President Heber J. Grant** often taught about the importance of paying an honest tithe. In 1898, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, he testified: "A man will say, 'I owe my neighbor and must pay him before I can settle my tithing.' Well, I know I owe lots of my neighbors, and they try to collect from me. But I owe



President Heber J. Grant and his wife Augusta, 1942

God an honest tithing; He has given me a testimony of Jesus and a hope of eternal life, and I intend to pay Him first and my neighbors afterwards. It is our duty to settle with the Lord first, and I intend to do it, with the help of my Heavenly Father. And I want to say to you, if you will be honest with the Lord, paying your tithing and keeping His commandments, He will not only bless you with the light and inspiration of His Holy Spirit, but you will be blessed in dollars and cents; you will be enabled to pay your debts, and the Lord will pour out temporal blessings upon you in great abundance" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1898, 16).

In 1925, he said: "The law of financial prosperity to the Latter-day Saints, under covenant with God, is to be an honest tithepayer, and not to rob the Lord in tithes and offerings. Prosperity comes to those who observe the law of tithing; and when I say prosperity I am not thinking of it in terms of dollars and cents alone, although as a rule the Latter-day Saints who are the best tithepayers are the most prosperous men, financially; but what I count as real prosperity, as the one thing of all others that is of great value to every man and woman living, is the growth in a knowledge of God, and in a testimony, and in the power to live the gospel and to inspire our families to do the same. That is prosperity of the truest kind" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1925, 10).

## Avoiding Debt Is a Welfare Principle [7.31]

**President Heber J. Grant** gave the following counsel against debt: "If a person owned what he had and did not have to pay interest, and only bought as he had the money to buy, the majority of people would be in reasonably comfortable circumstances. . . . It has been due to

In the Sacred Grove, September 22, 1923

debt, I think, that the main part of this suffering has come. We have mortgaged our future without taking into account the incidents that may happen—sickness, operations, etc.” (*Gospel Standards*, 112).



Heber J. Grant with his wife Augusta and nine daughters

### His Closest Associates Knew Him as a Generous Man [7.32]

In an address given during President Heber J. Grant’s funeral, **President David O. McKay** said: “President Grant enjoyed making money, but he loved to use it for the benefit of others. On more than one occasion, quietly, usually, forcefully, if necessary, but always unostentatiously, he has protected the good name of his associates, has paid mortgages on widows’ homes, has paid expenses of missionaries, given employment to the unemployed, rendered help and succor wherever needed. No mind has been more eager to bless, no heart more tender, no hand more generous than the heart and hand of President Grant. Thus in ‘going about doing good’ he ‘fanned the flame of human love, and raised the standard of civil virtue among mankind’” (*Improvement Era*, June 1945, 361).

Joseph Anderson, President Grant’s secretary, wrote: “No one will ever know how many mortgages on homes of widows he paid out of his own funds. Time and again he would inquire as to his bank balance. He had no special interest in the accumulation of money except for the good he could do with it” (*Prophets I Have Known* [1973], 30).

### He Made Contributions of Service and Love [7.33]

Heber J. Grant’s Church assignments were numerous, including a lifelong commitment to the MIA, in which he held many positions of leadership and helped establish the *Improvement Era*, serving as an editor and contributor from its beginning. He often found the time and means to attend the temple when near one. He usually arranged to have family members accompany him. As President of the Church, he dedicated three new temples. “President Grant advocated and supported in the most practical way work for the dead. Although he did not frequently discourse upon the subject, the records show that he has done more for his kindred dead than has any other man. That was typical of him; that was the way he did things” (Hinckley, *Heber J. Grant*, 125).

Besides all this, there were the thousands of books sent with personal messages in his own matchless handwriting to members and nonmembers, there were the endless hours spent in reclaiming the wayward, and there were the widows’ mortgages paid off and other philanthropies.



The First Presidency in 1925: Anthony W. Ivins, Heber J. Grant, and Charles W. Nibley

### He Died in Salt Lake City [7.34]

“In the late afternoon, May 14, 1945, President Heber J. Grant, peacefully passed away at his residence in Salt Lake City. He had been ailing for the past five years, but his courage and determination to press on and perform his duty, never deserted him. Each day, up to a short time before his death, he was found at the office attending to duties as much as the physician permitted him to do. His life had been one of great activity. In his early years he appeared frail, was rejected for insurance, because of his physical condition, however, he had been active always,

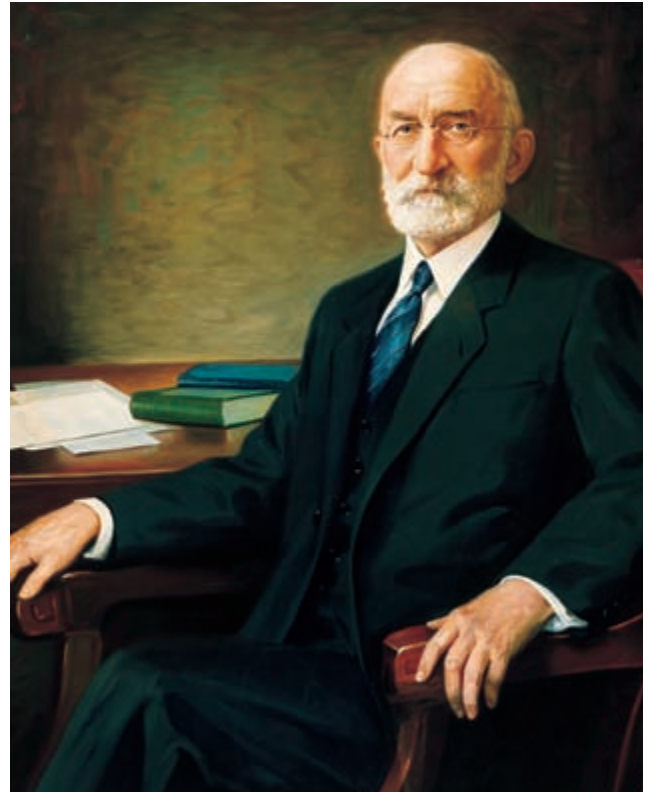


President Heber J. Grant

engaging in athletics, one time belonging to the champion baseball team of Utah. His energy was marvelous and his activities never ceased. There was never any compromise on his part with evil. Some of his strongest characteristics the public never realized. He had a tender, sympathetic nature, loved his friends dearly; was kind to the distressed; assisted the needy scores upon scores of times, the knowledge of which never got into any earthly record. His testimony of the Truth never wavered. His friends were legion outside of the Church, and he was dearly loved by his people" (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History*, 26th ed. [1950], 530–31).

The Second World War was ending in Europe when his tall, thin frame was laid to rest. Member and nonmember alike honored

and eulogized him. Thousands came to view him. At his funeral one of his counselors, **President J. Reuben Clark Jr.**, said of him: "He so lived his life that it had no dark place across which he must draw a curtain. His life had nothing to embarrass, nothing to hide, nothing of which he must be ashamed" (quoted in Hinckley, *Heber J. Grant*, 262).



President Heber J. Grant



At the dedication of the Alberta Canada Temple, August 1923; the first temple constructed outside of the United States. President Grant also dedicated the Laie Hawaii and Mesa Arizona Temples.

## "He Was a Giant of a Man" [7.35]

In his journal entry for March 14, 1995, **President Gordon B. Hinckley**, facing his new responsibilities as President of the Church, wrote: "It will be sixty years ago in July when I first came into this room as a newly returned missionary to meet with the First Presidency at the request of my mission president Elder Joseph F. Merrill of the Council of the Twelve. It is difficult to realize what has happened since then. To think that I now sit where President Heber J. Grant sat at that time. He was a giant of a man whom I loved" (quoted in Sheri L. Dew, *Go Forward with Faith: The Biography of Gordon B. Hinckley* [1996], 511).



# George Albert Smith

## Eighth President of the Church

8

### Highlights in the Life of George Albert Smith

Age	Events
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	He was born April 4, 1870, in Salt Lake City, Utah, to John Henry and Sarah Farr Smith.
13	He began working in a ZCMI clothing factory (1883); he received his patriarchal blessing, which foretold his calling as an Apostle (Jan. 1884).
21	He served a mission to southern Utah for the YMMIA (Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association; 1891).
22	He married Lucy Emily Woodruff (May 25, 1892).
22–24	He served a mission to the southern United States (June 1892–June 1894).
28	He was appointed receiver of the U.S. Land Office and Special Disbursing Agent for Utah by U.S. President William McKinley (1897–1902).
33	He was ordained an Apostle (Oct. 8, 1903).
34	He wrote his creed (1904).
39–42	He suffered from serious health problems (1909–12).
49–51	He served as president of the European Mission (June 1919–July 1921).
52	He was elected vice-president of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (1922).
61	He became a member of the National Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America (1931).
73	He was set apart as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (July 1, 1943).
75	He became President of the Church (May 21, 1945); he dedicated the Idaho Falls Idaho Temple (Sept. 23, 1945); he met with U.S. President Harry S. Truman (Nov. 3, 1945).
77	The Utah Pioneer Centennial was celebrated (1947).
81	He died in Salt Lake City, Utah (Apr. 4, 1951).

## His Patriarchal Blessing Profoundly Affected Him [8.1]

Ulysses S. Grant, Charles Darwin, Alexander Graham Bell—these were some of the names that commanded the attention of the world in 1870. In far-away Utah, a premortal appointment was kept with the birth of an infant who received the earthly name by which he would one day be loved and revered by thousands. It was in Salt Lake City on April 4, and the child was named George Albert Smith. Like other prophets, his youth was unpretentious. He was a pioneer boy, raised amid the excitement that attended the construction of the Salt Lake Temple. He spent his early youth herding cows, riding horses, and studying. He was also a musician.



George Albert Smith, about four years old

The patriarchal blessing that a 13-year-old George Albert Smith received from patriarch Zebedee Coltrin had a profound effect upon his mind and attitudes. In it he was told: “Thou was called and chosen of the Lord from before the foundation of the earth was laid to come forth in this dispensation to assist in building up the Zion of God upon the earth. . . . And thou shalt become a mighty prophet in the midst of the sons of Zion. And the angels of the Lord shall administer unto you. . . . Thou art destined to become a mighty man before the Lord, for thou shalt become a mighty Apostle in the Church and kingdom of God upon the earth, for none of thy father’s family shall have more power with God than thou shalt have, for none shall excel thee” (quoted in George Albert Smith, *The Teachings of George Albert Smith*, ed. Robert and Susan McIntosh [1996], xix).

## He Had Early Personal Experiences with Great Leaders [8.2]

George Albert Smith was raised amid great servants of God. He was named after his grandfather, George A. Smith, who had been an Apostle and a member of the First Presidency. His father, John Henry Smith, was also an Apostle and became a counselor to President Joseph F. Smith.

When George Albert was a boy of five years, his mother sent him to deliver a note to President Brigham Young. As he opened and walked through the massive gate that led to Brigham Young’s home, the watchman stopped him and asked what he wanted. The boy replied that he wanted to see President Young. The watchman laughed and said he didn’t think Brigham Young had time to see a small boy. At that moment, President Young walked out of his home and asked what was going on. The watchman explained and President Young replied, “Show him in.” Recalling this incident, **George Albert Smith** said:

“President Young took me by the hand and led me into his office, sat down at his desk and lifted me up on his knee and put his arm around me. In the kindest way one could imagine, he said, ‘What do you want of President Young?’ ‘Just think of it! He was President of a great Church and Governor of a Territory, and with all the duties he had to perform, yet I as a little boy was received with as much dignity, and kindness as if I had come as a governor from an adjoining state’ (quoted in Arthur R. Bassett, “George Albert Smith: On Reaching Out to Others,” *New Era*, Jan. 1972, 51).

This experience helped teach him “that great men always make time for those in need. . . .

“Imagine the image the future prophet of the Lord, George Albert Smith, had of President Young as he, a little boy, walked away from his office. In his adult life he never forgot that lesson and was always conscious of people who easily could have been passed by as insignificant to others” (Bassett, *New Era*, Jan. 1972, 51–52).

Years later, as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, **Elder George Albert Smith** spoke of the



Children of John Henry and Sarah Farr Smith. George Albert is the first on the left.

importance of the lessons he learned from those great leaders: "From childhood, I have never been taught to do anything improper, or that would harm one of my heavenly Father's children; but from infancy I have been taught to acquire industry, sobriety, honesty, integrity, and all virtues possessed by men and women whom God delights to honor and bless. I thank my heavenly Father this day that these teachings have come to me from Him through His faithful servants" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1906, 46–47).

## He Learned from the Example and Teachings of His Father [8.3]

The example set by his father had a great impact on George Albert Smith. Edith Elliott, George Albert Smith's daughter shared this incident: "One day Father was walking down a street in Salt Lake City with his father, John Henry Smith. A drunkard came up to John Henry and asked for a quarter for a hot meal. Without hesitation, John Henry gave him the money. After this incident, George Albert asked his father why he had given the drunkard the money when it was highly possible that he would spend it on liquor. His father replied that he would give quarters to ten men he thought might use the money on drink, if there was a chance that just one would use it properly" (personal interview by CES Curriculum Services, June 30, 1972).



John Henry Smith, father of George Albert Smith

**President George Albert Smith** shared another example of his father's love for others: "As I think of my regard and my affection for my Father's family, the human family, I remember something my earthly father said, and I think probably I inherited that in part from him. He said, 'I have never seen a child of God so deep in the gutter that I have not had the impulse to stoop down and lift him up and put him on his feet and start him again.' I would like to say I have never seen one of my Father's children in my life that I have not realized he was my brother and that God loves every one of his children, but he does not love our wickedness and our infidelity" ("President Smith's Leadership Address," *Church News*, Feb. 16, 1946, 6).

## He Had Faith to Be Healed [8.4]

"As a young boy he was taken ill with typhoid fever. The doctor counseled his mother to keep him in bed for three weeks, to give him no solid food, and to have him drink coffee. In later years George Albert recalled:

"When he went away, I told mother that I didn't want any coffee. I had been taught that the Word of Wisdom, given by the Lord to Joseph Smith, advised us not to use coffee.

"Mother had brought three children into the world and two had died. She was unusually anxious about me.

"I asked her to send for Brother Hawks, one of our ward teachers. He was a worker at the foundry, a poor and humble man of great faith in the power of the Lord. He came, administered to me and blessed me that I might be healed.

"When the doctor came next morning I was playing outside with other children. He was surprised. He examined me and discovered that my fever had gone and that I seemed to be well.

"I was grateful to the Lord for my recovery. I was sure that he had healed me'" (*Teachings of George Albert Smith*, xvii).



Sarah Farr Smith, mother of George Albert Smith

## He Was Steadfast and Faithful during Times of Trial [8.5]

The security felt by those who trust the Lord, in spite of whatever turmoil may exist around them, is illustrated in this story **Elder George Albert Smith**, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, told about his childhood: "We . . . lived in a two story frame house and when the wind blew hard it would rock as if it would topple over. Sometimes I would be too frightened to go to sleep. My bed was in a little room by itself, and many a night I have climbed out and got down on my knees and asked my Father in Heaven to take care of the house, preserve it that it would not break in pieces and I have got back into my little bed just as sure that I would be safeguarded from evil as if I held my Father's hand" ("To the Relief Society," *Relief Society Magazine*, Dec. 1932, 707–8).



George Albert Smith and his three brothers: Don Carlos (standing), George Albert, Winslow Farr, and Ezra Chase (sitting, left to right)

There were many years of preparation, work, service, and obedience. They were years that saw him fill a short-term mission to southern Utah, work for Utah's leading department store, and marry his childhood sweetheart, Lucy Woodruff. They were also years of refinement through suffering—typhoid fever as a child, a severe eye injury while working on a railroad survey crew on the western desert, and two narrow escapes from death while serving a mission to the southern United States.

He was afflicted for five painful years with a serious disease. He feared for his life, but the impression came that his earthly mission was not complete. Suffering brought strength and compassion.

As a young missionary, George Albert Smith and his companion, J. Golden Kimball, were preaching in Alabama. "Their preaching in the neighborhood had aroused bitter opposition, which this night turned violent. About midnight, the cabin was surrounded by an angry mob whose leader pounded on the door, demanding in vulgar and profane language that the elders come out or 'they were going to shoot them.' When they refused to obey, the mob commenced to fire into the corners of the cabin. 'Splinters were flying over our heads in every direction,' Elder Smith wrote of the incident. 'There were a few moments of quiet, then another volley of shots was fired and more splinters flew.' He was interested in his reaction to what he considered to be 'one of the most horrible events,' in his life. 'I was very calm as I lay there,' the missionary wrote later, 'but I was sure that as long as I was preaching the word of God and following his teachings that the Lord would protect me, and he did.' The next morning when the elders stepped



George Albert Smith (right), age 16, and friend John Howard enjoyed entertaining others.

outside, they found a bundle of heavy hickory sticks of the kind that had been used to beat other missionaries in the south" (Francis M. Gibbons, *George Albert Smith: Kind and Caring Christian, Prophet of God* [1990], 26–27).

Between 1909 and 1912, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, **George Albert Smith** struggled with very serious health problems. During this time of trial, he later confided to a friend: "When I was in my serious condition [1909–12] I did not know whether my work was completed or not, but I told the Lord that if it was complete and He was preparing to call me home, that I would be ready to go, but if there was more work for me to perform, I would like to get well. I placed myself in his hands to do as he saw fit, and soon after that I began to recover" (quoted in Glen R. Stubbs, "A Biography of George Albert Smith, 1870 to 1951" [Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1974], 317).



Missionary conference, Chattanooga, Tennessee, 1893

## He Married Lucy Woodruff [8.6]

Lucy Emily Woodruff was a granddaughter of President Wilford Woodruff. She was a woman of great faith and intelligence. She and George Albert Smith had known each other since they were children, and she loved and respected him. But her affections were divided between George Albert and another suitor.

In 1891, the courtship was interrupted when George received a mission call from the First Presidency of the Church to strengthen the young people, members of the Young Men's and Young Women's Mutual Improvement Associations, in the Juab, Millard, Beaver, and Parowan stakes in southern Utah. One week into his assignment, **George Albert Smith** wrote in his journal: "The letter that I looked for never came." When George received Lucy Woodruff's letter the next day, the topic was her possible marriage plans to her other suitor. George responded by letter expressing



Lucy Emily Woodruff, age 10



Lucy Woodruff, age 19

his feelings for Lucy and offered the following advice: "Be prayerful and humble; do not mistake the duty you owe to others. Your first duty is to yourself. I feel that you will be happy and my prayer is that you will" (quoted in Gibbons, *George Albert Smith*, 19).

Lucy stopped her marriage plans with the other suitor, but her affections still vacillated between the two men. After months of turmoil, she finally broke off her relationship with the other man and married George Albert Smith in the Manti Utah Temple on May 25, 1892. "Afterward, as she put the affair in perspective and saw that she had merely been infatuated with a handsome man who lacked substance, Lucy Woodruff Smith exclaimed again and again that she had 'almost made a terrible mistake'" (Gibbons, *George Albert Smith*, 21).

## He Was Called to the Apostleship [8.7]

George Albert Smith was ordained a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on October 8, 1903. He was 33 years old. Despite almost continuous physical weakness, he traveled, preached, worked, and prayed. Juvenile delinquents, the displaced and homeless, the blind, "splinter groups" from the Church, the Boy Scout movement—all received his attention.

## He Had a Personal Creed [8.8]

At the age of 34, **George Albert Smith** prepared a list of life-long goals. His being called as an Apostle was a crucial time to put in writing just what he wanted to do with the balance of his life: "I would be a friend to the friendless and find joy in ministering to the needs of the poor. I would visit the sick and afflicted and inspire in them a desire for faith to be healed. I would teach the truth to the understanding and blessing of all mankind. I

would seek out the erring one and try to win him back to a righteous and a happy life. I would not seek to force people to live up to my ideals but rather love them into doing the thing that is right. I would live with the masses and help to solve their problems that their earth life may be happy. I would avoid the publicity of high positions and discourage the flattery of thoughtless friends. I would not knowingly wound the feeling of any, not even one who may have wronged me, but would seek to do him good and make him my friend. I would overcome the tendency to selfishness and jealousy and rejoice in the successes of all the children of my Heavenly Father. I would not be an enemy to any living soul. Knowing that the Redeemer of mankind has offered to the world the only plan that will fully develop us and make us really happy here and hereafter I feel it not only a duty but a blessed privilege to disseminate this truth" (quoted in Bryant S. Hinckley, "Greatness in Men: Superintendent George Albert Smith," *Improvement Era*, Mar. 1932, 295).

George Albert Smith strived to live according to his creed in every detail. It required of him tremendous sacrifice. His love was sincere and constant. He showed the ultimate in tolerance, trust, and personal concern toward thousands of our Heavenly Father's children in his travels and labors. He was a sensitive vessel through whom the love of the Master could be made manifest. In the life of George Albert Smith we see that love is no idle feeling. It is action—constant, alert, and anxious to serve at any cost.

## "What Have You Done with My Name?"

[8.9]

After his call to the apostleship, a powerful lesson was impressed upon **George Albert Smith** through a dream he had of his grandfather George A. Smith, who had been a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and a counselor to President Brigham Young and who had died when George Albert was five years old. George Albert had been seriously ill and later recalled:

"I lost consciousness of my surroundings and thought I had passed to the Other Side. I found myself standing with my back to a large and beautiful lake, facing a great forest of trees. There was no one in sight, and there



George Albert Smith



George Albert Smith's grandfather George A. Smith

was no boat upon the lake or any other visible means to indicate how I might have arrived there. I realized, or seemed to realize, that I had finished my work in mortality and had gone home. I began to look around, to see if I could not find someone. There was no evidence of anyone living there, just those great, beautiful trees in front of me and the wonderful lake behind me.

"I began to explore, and soon I found a trail through the woods which seemed to have been used very little, and which was almost obscured by grass. I followed this trail, and after I had walked for some time and had traveled a considerable distance through the forest, I saw a man coming towards me. I became aware that he was a very large man, and I hurried my steps to reach him, because I recognized him as my grandfather. In mortality he weighed over three hundred pounds, so you may know he was a large man. I remember how happy I was to see him coming. I had been given his name and had always been proud of it.

"When Grandfather came within a few feet of me, he stopped. His stopping was an invitation for me to stop. Then—and this I would like the boys and girls and young people never to forget—he looked at me very earnestly and said:

"I would like to know what you have done with my name.'

"Everything I had ever done passed before me as though it were a flying picture on a screen—everything I had done. Quickly this vivid retrospect came down to the very time I was standing there. My whole life had passed before me. I smiled and looked at my grandfather and said:

"I have never done anything with your name of which you need be ashamed.'

"He stepped forward and took me in his arms, and as he did so, I became conscious again of my earthly surroundings. My pillow was wet as though water had been poured on it—wet with tears of gratitude that I could answer unashamed" (*Your Good Name*, *Improvement Era*, Mar. 1947, 139).

## He Shared the Gospel without Timidness [8.10]

George Albert Smith was a missionary. In one 10-year period, 1,200 books and pamphlets were mailed to people who were not members of the Church, whom he had met during his travels. Historical sites, such as the Hill Cumorah and the Sacred Grove, were purchased to further spread the message of salvation. As a receiver of public monies for the land office of the state of Utah, president of national congresses, chairman of the boards of directors for many companies, and active in the support of social improvement and the arts and sciences, he worked with the major intent to present the Church to the world.

Concerning missionary work, **George Albert Smith** said: "Every happiness and every joy that has been worthy of the name has been the result of keeping the commandments of God and observing his advice and counsel. So, as we go forward, each of us, each having an influence



George Albert Smith

with our neighbors and our friends, let us not be too timid. We do not need to annoy people, but let us make them feel and understand that we are interested, not in making them members of the Church for membership, but in bringing them into the Church that they may enjoy the same blessings that we enjoy" (in *Conference Report*, Apr. 1948, 162).

## We Will Go to Every Part of the World [8.11]

**President George Albert Smith** told priesthood holders: "We must preach the gospel to the South American countries which we have scarcely touched. We must preach the gospel to every African section that we haven't been in yet. We must preach the gospel to Asia. And I might go on and say in all parts of the world where we have not yet been permitted to go. I look upon Russia as one of the most fruitful fields for the teaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And if I am not mistaken, it will not be long before the people who are there will desire to know something about this work which has reformed the lives of so many people. . . . Our most important obligation, my brethren, is

to divide with our Father's children all those fundamental truths, all his rules and regulations which prepare us for eternal life, known as the gospel of Jesus Christ. Until we have done that to the full limit of our power, we will not receive all the blessings which we might otherwise have" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1945, 119).

## The Gospel Will Be Taught with Improved Technology [8.12]

In 1946 **President George Albert Smith** spoke of technological improvements that would come and advance the building up of the kingdom of God on earth: "Short-wave broadcasting will continue to improve, and it will not be long until, from this pulpit and other places that will be provided, the servants of the Lord will be able to deliver messages to isolated groups who are so far away they cannot be reached. In that way and other ways, the gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord, the only power of God unto salvation in preparation for the celestial kingdom, will be heard in all parts of the world, and many of you who are here will live to see that day" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1946, 6).



## Millions Will Accept the Truth [8.13]

**President George Albert Smith** said: "Heavenly Father . . . has called me to go to many parts of the earth, and more than a million miles have been traversed since I was called into the ministry. I have traveled in many lands and climes, and wherever I have gone I have found good people, sons and daughters of the living God who are waiting for the gospel of Jesus Christ, and there are thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions of them, who would be accepting the truth if they only knew what we know" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1945, 120).

## There Can Be Peace in a War-Torn World [8.14]

[8.14]

While the world was in turmoil during World War I, **Elder George Albert Smith** taught: "Though the world may be filled with distress, and the heavens gather blackness, and the vivid lightnings flash, and the earth quake from center to circumference, if we know that God lives, and our lives are righteous, we will be happy, there will be peace unspeakable because we know our Father approves our lives" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1915, 28).

After World War I, Elder Smith was instrumental in reestablishing missionary work on the European continent. As president of the European Mission, he overcame prejudice and hostility through visits to government leaders and newspaper editors. He defended the call of living prophets and prophesied that those who shunned the counsel of the prophets would suffer disastrous results.

## He Taught of Change during World War II [8.15]

[8.15]

In 1942 the world was once again enveloped in war.

**Elder George Albert Smith** spoke of the change living gospel principles could bring:

"Now tonight we are here in peace and quiet. The world is on fire. Everywhere peace has been taken from the earth, and the devil has been given power over his own dominion. God has said if we will honor Him and keep His commandments—if we will observe His laws He will fight our battles and destroy the wicked, and when the time comes He will come down in heaven—not from heaven—but He will bring heaven with Him—and this earth upon which we dwell, will be the celestial kingdom.



President Smith was concerned about the effects of World War II throughout the world. This photograph shows Dutch Saints harvesting potatoes to be sent to members in Germany.

“What if all the world knew and believed that? What a change there would be in the conditions among the children of men! What joy would be in the place of sorrow and distress today! It is your duty and mine, having received this information, to impart it to others” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1942, 49).

The results of World War II were ugly and discouraging. More than 50 countries had been involved, and an estimated 55 million people had lost their lives. The war had cost over a trillion dollars. Millions of people in Europe and Asia were without adequate food, shelter, and clothing. Sorrow, hatred, and despair stalked through nations and homes. In one way or another, the war had touched the life of nearly everyone on the earth.

## He Was Called to Be President of the Church [8.16]

On May 21, 1945, when the full extent of carnage and devastation left behind by World War II was becoming apparent, George Albert Smith was moved from his time of preparation into his foreordained position as President of the Church. President Smith did not presume to declare what his personal mission as prophet, seer, and revelator would be. However, **Elder Joseph Fielding Smith**, Patriarch to the Church and a son of Hyrum Mack Smith and a grandson of President Joseph F. Smith, uttered this prophetic statement:



B. H. Roberts, George Albert Smith, and Andrew Jenson



The First Presidency: J. Reuben Clark, George Albert Smith, and David O. McKay

“It is frequently said that the Lord has raised up a particular man to perform a particular mission. Everyone of us here has heard that discussed and has heard how the peculiar talents of each of the presidents of the Church have been of a special value during his respective mission. I wish that all the members of the Church could have witnessed the council meeting wherein the Presidency was reorganized. If ever there was a time when the Spirit of the Lord was indubitably manifest, it was on that occasion. Everyone present thrilled to it. Everyone present was aware, beyond doubt, of the absolute rightness of it.

“It is not for me to say what particular mission President George Albert Smith has ahead of him. This I do know, however, that at this particular time in the world’s history, never was the need for love among brethren so desperately needed as it is needed today. Furthermore, I do know this, that there is no man of my acquaintance who loves the human family, collectively and individually, more profoundly than does President George Albert Smith. Those two things coming in conjunction, the need for love, his presidency at this time, have for me at least, peculiar significance” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1945, 31–32).

## He Sent an Emissary of Peace [8.17]

The missionaries had been called home before World War II broke out and many Latter-day Saints, particularly in the European nations, did not see a Church representative for years. President George Albert Smith was concerned about those Saints. After the war, unable to visit them himself, President Smith sent **Elder Ezra Taft Benson** to find out how the Church could help them and how much aid they needed. Elder Benson described what he saw:



President Smith was *Time* magazine's "Man of the Year," July 21, 1947.

"I will not take time today to describe the terrors of war, the worst of which is not the physical combat but that which follows: the abandonment of moral and religious restraints, the increase in sin, disease; the increase in infant mortality; and all the suffering which accompanies famine, disease, and immorality. We saw these things on every side. We saw nations prostrate, flat on their backs economically. We found it difficult

even to get a telephone call through from London to many of our missions on the continent when we arrived. We could not even make a telephone call to Holland, let alone countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia, and other nations. Almost the only type of transportation available was that under the control of the military. . . .

"I think I shall never forget those first meetings with the Saints. They have suffered much, my brethren and sisters. We wondered just how they would receive us, what the reaction would be. Would their hearts be filled with bitterness? Would there be hatred there? Would they have soured on the Church? I well remember our first meeting at Karlsruhe. After we had made visits through Belgium, Holland, and the Scandinavian countries, we went into occupied Germany. We finally found our way to the meeting place, a partially bombed-out building located in the interior of a block. The Saints had been in session for some two hours waiting for us, hoping that we would come because the word had reached them that we might be there for the conference. And then for the first time in my life I saw almost an entire audience in tears as we walked up onto the platform, and they realized that at last, after six or seven long years, representatives from Zion, as they put it, had finally come back to them. Then as the meeting closed, prolonged at their request, they insisted we go to the door and shake hands with each one of them as he left the bombed-out building. And we noted that many of them, after they had passed through the line went back and came through the second and third time, so happy were they to grasp our hands. As I looked into their upturned faces, pale, thin, many of these Saints dressed in rags, some of them barefooted, I could see the light of faith in their eyes as

they bore testimony to the divinity of this great latter-day work, and expressed their gratitude for the blessings of the Lord" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1947, 153–54).

The full-time missionary force was raised from its wartime low of 386 in 1945 to over 5,800 in 1951.



President George Albert Smith with United States President Harry S. Truman

## He Met with the President of the United States [8.18]

Hatred, despair, and sorrow were prevalent throughout the 1940s. World War II had hardened the hearts of many people. President George Albert Smith was a man whose love for others had been forged in the very furnace of affliction. He was a man who had committed himself to the Lord through long nights of prayer and years of service to others. Now he was God's prophet. He had 90 train cars full of food and clothing sent to the stricken Saints in Europe. A special fast was called and money was contributed to aid not only Church members, but others. Missions were reopened and new ones were created. **President Smith** told of a visit to the president of the United States during this time:

"When the war was over, I went representing the Church, to see the president of the United States. When I called on him, he received me very graciously—I had met him before—and I said: 'I have just come to ascertain from you, Mr. President, what your attitude will be if the Latter-day Saints are prepared to ship food and clothing and bedding to Europe.'

"He smiled and looked at me, and said: 'Well, what do you want to ship it over there for? Their money isn't any good.'

"I said: 'We don't want their money.' He looked at me and asked: 'You don't mean you are going to give it to them?'"

"I said: 'Of course, we would give it to them. They are our brothers and sisters and are in distress. God has blessed us with a surplus, and we will be glad to send it if we can have the co-operation of the government.'"

"He said: 'You are on the right track,' and added, 'we will be glad to help you in any way we can.'"

"I have thought of that a good many times. After we had sat there a moment or two, he said again: 'How long will it take you to get this ready?'"

"I said: 'It's all ready.'"

"The government you remember had been destroying food and refusing to plant grain during the war, so I said to him:

"'Mr. President, while the administration at Washington were advising the destroying of food, we were building elevators and filling them with grain, and increasing our flocks and our herds, and now what we need is the cars and the ships in order to send considerable food, clothing and bedding to the people of Europe who are in distress. We have an organization in the Church that has over two thousand homemade quilts ready.'"

"... The result was that many people received warm clothing and bedding and food without any delay. Just as fast as we could get cars and ships, we had what was necessary to send to Europe" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1947, 5-6).

### Love Seeks Out the Weary [8.19]

President George Albert Smith was recognized as a man who had a sincere love and concern for everyone, especially when they needed help the most. On April 8, 1951, shortly after President Smith died, **Elder John A. Widtsoe**, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, shared the following experience:

"During the events of the last few days, many memories have crowded in upon my mind. In a late afternoon of a warm, sultry day in August or September, I sat in my office rather tired after the day's work. The University of Utah had had internal dissensions which had been fanned by enemies into a nationwide scandal. I had been called in to assist others who were trying to return the institution and its work to a normal condition. It was the third time in my life that I had been obliged to serve my state in such a capacity. I was weary. Just then there was a



President Smith met Helen Keller at the Hotel Utah in 1941. When he was 18 years old, George Albert Smith incurred an eye injury from the sun while working as a surveyor for the railroad. His vision was impaired for the rest of his life.

knock upon the door, and in walked George Albert Smith. He said, 'I am on the way home after my day's work. I thought of you and the problems that you are expected to solve. I came in to comfort you and to bless you.'

"That was the way of George Albert Smith. Of the many friends I have throughout the state and beyond, he was the only one, except a few of my intimate friends, who took time to give me the loving help in the work I had to do. Of course I appreciated that; I shall never forget

it. We talked together for awhile; we parted, he went home. My heart was lifted. I was weary no longer" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1951, 99).

### Love Seeks Any Opportunity to Serve [8.20]

"On one occasion [George Albert Smith] was traveling back from a convention. In his company was the daughter of President Heber J. Grant. She tells of his looking across the aisle and seeing a young mother and her children, surrounded by luggage. He felt a need to talk with her and to inquire after her welfare.

"'In a few minutes President Smith was over talking to the young mother. He came back to our seat and said, 'Yes it is just as I thought. The little mother is going on a long journey; I have looked at her ticket. I can't understand why the man who sold it to her didn't know a better route for her to travel. As it is she will have a long wait in Ogden and again in Chicago. I have her ticket and am going to get off in Ogden and see if I can't get it changed so she can make other connections and not have the long wait in Ogden and Chicago.'"

"President Smith was off the train the moment it stopped and set the affairs of the young mother in order, having her ticket changed to afford her greater convenience. Such was the sensitivity for others of this man" (Bassett, *New Era*, Jan. 1972, 52).

## Love Finds Time for Others [8.21]

"On a . . . trip to the Middle West, [President George Albert Smith] was rushing to catch a train when a mother with four small youngsters stopped him so that her children might have the opportunity of shaking hands with him. Someone took a picture of the incident, and a



President George Albert Smith received the silver beaver and the silver buffalo medals from the Boy Scouts of America.

copy was sent to President Smith with this notation: 'I am sending you this picture because it is a graphic illustration of the man we believe you are. The reason we treasure it so is because, as busy as you were, in spite of the fact you were being hurried into your car and then to your waiting train, you still took time out to shake the hand of each child in this family' " (D. Arthur Haycock, "A Day with the President," *Improvement Era*, Apr. 1950, 288).

## Happiness Is in Proportion to Love and Service [8.22]

**Elder George Albert Smith**, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught: "Do not forget no matter how much you may give in money, no matter how you may desire the things of this world to make yourselves happy, your happiness will be in proportion to your charity and to your kindness and to your love of those with whom you associate here on earth. Our Heavenly Father has said in very plain terms that he who says he loves God and does not love his brother is not truthful" (*Relief Society Magazine*, Dec. 1932, 709).



At the dedication of the "This Is the Place" monument in Salt Lake City, Utah



President George Albert Smith with Navajo Indians, October 23, 1948

## He Had Vision and Compassion for the Native Americans [8.23]

**Elder Spencer W. Kimball**, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, spoke of President George Albert Smith's concern for the descendants of Lehi who were native Americans:

"As his great love for his fellowmen began to grow into a great compassion, he saw in vision a certain whole people who went down from the proverbial Jerusalem to Jericho and they fell among thieves. He saw them stripped of their raiment and sorely wounded. He saw them deserted and deprived. He saw priests come by who saw their plight and passed by on the other side. He saw modern Levites who came and looked and passed by on the other side. President Smith determined it was time to do something constructive for these Indian people who had fallen into misfortune. He determined that it was time to bind up their wounds, and to pour thereon the oil.

"He went to Pres. Heber J. Grant, (President Smith was then in the Council of the Twelve), and asked him for permission to do work among the Indian people which was granted. A committee was organized and the work began in a small way as many programs do" ("Elder Kimball Tells of President Smith's Concern for His Lamanite Brethren," *Church News*, Apr. 11, 1951, 11).

## His Love Reached Out to Disaffected Groups [8.24]

President George Albert Smith had a profound concern for people who had become disaffected from the Church, and he sought to show them their error. One incident is representative of this. A large faction had broken away from the Church and established their own church. They were disgruntled with some leaders and presumed to take matters into their own hands. President Smith made a historic visit to this group in 1946. He met with them and shook their hands, spoke to them, and prayed and wept for them. They were touched by his presence. He looked and acted like a prophet. They acknowledged that he was a prophet. Feeling the radiant love of Christ reaching out to them through the Lord's anointed, 1,200 people returned to the safety of the Church from which they had strayed.



President George Albert Smith with motion picture actress Ann Blyth, about 1949

## He Warned of the Latter-Day Judgments [8.25]

Because of his great love for mankind, **President George Albert Smith** could not remain silent about the judgments that would engulf the world if its people did not repent. Like Elijah, he spoke with power and

authority. On one occasion he warned: "It will not be long until calamities will overtake the human family unless there is speedy repentance" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1950, 169).

He was as courageous as Abinadi, who, in the face of criticism and slander, prophesied the results of such evil. Of those who belittled the Prophet Joseph Smith, **President Smith** said, "[They] will be forgotten and their remains will go back to mother earth, if they have not already gone, and the odor of their infamy will never die, while the glory and honor and majesty and courage and fidelity manifested by the Prophet Joseph Smith will attach to his name forever" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1946, 181–82).

## The World Is Spiritually Sick [8.26]

**President George Albert Smith** warned:

"The world is sick. It is not the first time it has been sick. It has had a good many different experiences of that kind. Sometimes nations have had to be wiped out because of the wickedness of the people who live in them. The Lord, all down through the ages, has spoken to his leaders and teachers who are inspired, but when the world refuses to heed after it has been properly taught, it places itself in a position of saying to our Heavenly Father who owns this world—he is our landlord—'We do not need you. We will do just as we please.'"

"Unfortunately, people who think that way do not realize how they are shortening their own experiences in life, and setting the stage for the sorrows that may follow" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1949, 167).

## Many Have Fallen Away from a True Belief in God [8.27]

**President Smith** spoke of the diminishing belief in God and in the divine mission of Jesus Christ:

"It is a strange thing how difficult it is for many people to believe that there is a God. There are many who are anti-Christ, they can believe in anything, almost, that you can think of and produce arguments for believing it, and I want to say to you today, that the largest portion of the population of the world that we live in is anti-Christ, not the followers of Christ at all. And among those who claim to believe in Christianity, comparatively few of them really believe in the divine mission of Jesus Christ.

"Well, what is the result? People have turned away from the Lord and He cannot bless them when they refuse to be blessed" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1948, 179).



President George Albert Smith and his counselors, David O. McKay and J. Reuben Clark

## Falsehood Has Become More Preferred Than Truth [8.28]

**President George Albert Smith** said: “Someone has said of the people of the world that they would rather believe a lie and be damned than accept the truth. That is rather a severe statement, but I think perhaps it will bear acceptance as fact. There is nothing in the world more deleterious or harmful to the human family than hatred, prejudice, suspicion, and the attitude that some people have toward their fellows, of unkindness” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1949, 5).

## It Is Not a Hopeless Situation [8.29]

**President George Albert Smith** warned about the consequences of the world’s unrighteousness, but offered hope of preventing them: “I fear that the time is coming, unless we can find some way not only to prevent the destruction of human life by careless accidents, but also unless we can call the people of this world to repent of their sins and turn from the error of their ways, that the great war that has just passed [World War II] will be an insignificant thing, as far as calamity is concerned, compared to that which is before us. And we can avoid it if we will; if we will each do our part, it can be prevented” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1946, 149).

## Avoiding Calamity Must Be Done in the Lord’s Way [8.30]

As armies were returning to their homelands in 1945, after World War II, leaders of nations were thinking and meeting and talking about treaties, laws, and charters. There were grand hopes for a lasting peace. But they

sought peace through the world’s way—to solve the problems of war through politics. While the international scurry of reconstruction, legislation, and man-made promises went on, another voice spoke plainly and certainly. It was the voice of the Lord through His prophet. **President George Albert Smith** declared: “We can legislate until doomsday but that will not make men righteous. It will be necessary for people who are in the dark to repent of their sins, correct their lives, and live in such a righteous way that they can enjoy the spirit of our Heavenly Father” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1949, 6).

## Only with the Spirit Can Men Design a Successful Peace [8.31]

Well before World War II erupted, **Elder George Albert Smith**, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, warned: “There is much confusion in the world and there seems to be no way to remove it except by the power of our Heavenly Father. The wisdom of the world is failing, the scripture is fulfilled, and today the wisest of all men are seeking, by means of legislation, to bring about a better condition and a more wholesome life among the human family. They may strive in that way, but unless men have faith in God, unless they understand the purpose of life, they will not go very far. The people of the world must repent of their sins before the Lord can give to them the peace and happiness desired. No other plan will succeed” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1934, 27).

Years later, after World War II had ended, **President Smith** declared: “This terrible world war that has filled people with hatred for one another, has had its effect on everybody, apparently. And there is no longer the idea among the children of men that they can sit down around a peace table and satisfy all those who are concerned. Why? Because they do not have the Spirit of God; and without it they never will come to an



George Albert Smith was among the General Authorities assigned to purchase and preserve important Church history sites. In this photograph is Lucy Woodruff Smith standing on top of the Hill Cumorah with Pliny T. Sexton, who was the owner of most of the hill. By 1928 the Church acquired the Hill Cumorah and all of the property around it.



President Smith with Boy Scouts, February 14, 1950

agreement. Now, we know that and the world does not know it" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1948, 180).

## The Constitution of the United States Was Inspired by God [8.32]

**President George Albert Smith** said: "You know, and I know, that the Ten Commandments contain the will of our Heavenly Father, and I am grateful, not only for the civil laws but also for the laws God has given us. I feel bound to conform my life to the teachings of the Ten Commandments. I feel equally bound to sustain the Constitution of the United States which came from the same source as the Ten Commandments. Unless the people of this great nation can realize these things and repent, they may forfeit the liberty that they now enjoy, and the blessings that are so multiplied among us" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1949, 169).

## We Must Live to Be Worthy of the Blessings We Pray For [8.33]

**President George Albert Smith** said: "What about America? I was in a meeting, not very long ago, where a group of Boy Scouts stood and sang, 'God Bless America,' and they sang it beautifully, and all the time they were singing I asked myself the question, 'How can he bless America until America repents?' Every great blessing that we desire is promised us by our Heavenly Father on condition that we honor him and keep his commandments. Praying is not sufficient. Not only must we pray but we must live to be worthy of the blessing" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1948, 184).

## "Stay on the Lord's Side of the Line" [8.34]

**President George Albert Smith** often divided influences into two categories. If we choose the one, there is perfect safety; if we choose the other, there is no safety. His words provide a simple key for having peace in a world of tumult:

"There are two influences in the world. The one is the influence of our Heavenly Father and the other is the influence of Satan. We can take our choice which territory we want to live in, that of our Heavenly Father or that of Satan.

"I have many times repeated what my grandfather said. He, too, talked from this stand, and it was he who gave me his name. In advising his family he said, 'There is a line of demarcation, well defined. On one side of the line is the Lord's territory. On the other side of the line is the devil's territory.' And he said, 'If you will stay on the Lord's side of the line, you are perfectly safe, because the adversary of all righteousness can not cross that line.'

"What does that mean? It means to me that those who are living righteous lives, keeping all of the commandments of our Heavenly Father are perfectly safe, but not those who trifle with his advice and counsel" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1949, 5–6).

## The Lord Will Fight Our Battles [8.35]

During World War II, as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, **Elder George Albert Smith** taught of divine protection: "No matter whether the clouds may gather, no matter how the war drums may beat, no matter what conditions may arise in the world, here in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, wherever we are honoring and keeping the commandments of God, there will be protection from the powers of evil, and men and women will be permitted to live upon the earth until their lives are finished in honor and glory if they will keep the



President Smith's Boy Scout memorabilia



President George Albert Smith in aviator's clothing and his wife, Lucy, standing in front of an airplane

commandments of our Heavenly Father" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1942, 15).

### "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth" [8.36]

George Albert Smith's days were spent in an unwearying effort to bring people closer to the Master whom he served. Then in 1951 his health failed rapidly and his energy ebbed away. His life's mission was complete.

**Bishop Robert L. Simpson**, then a counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, spoke with President Smith's daughter Edith Elliott about President Smith's last day:

"She told me that, on the very last day of President Smith's life, the family had gathered around his bedside. He was breathing more deeply, and they were concerned. The doctor stepped aside, letting the family draw close. The eldest son leaned over, and he said, 'Father, is there something you'd like to say to the family—something special?'"

"Then she went on to describe this great prophet, with a smile on his lips, saying, 'Yes, only this: I know that my Redeemer liveth; I know that my Redeemer liveth'" (*The Powers and Responsibilities of the Priesthood*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [Mar. 31, 1964], 7–8).

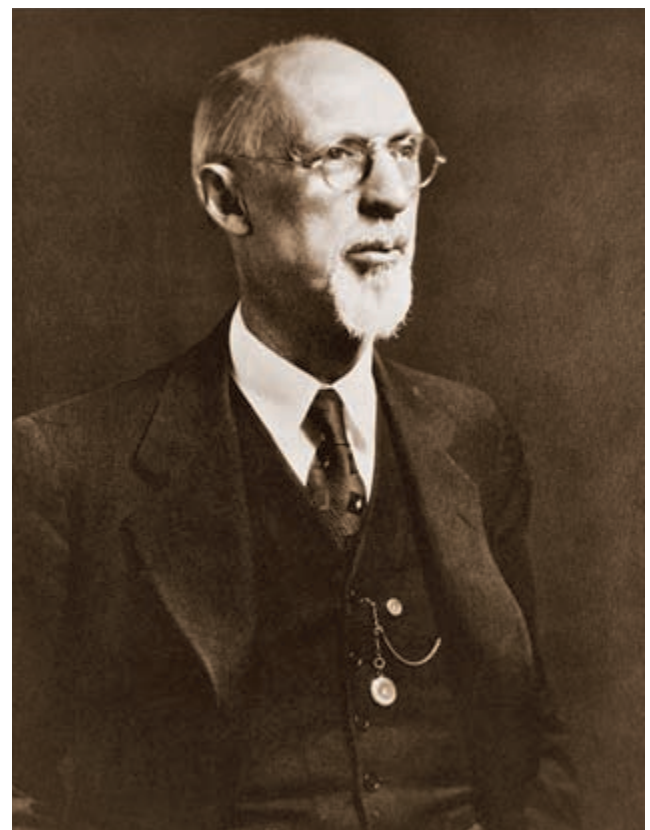
President Smith's loving influence, felt by so many, is exemplified in the following tributes paid by two men who were then members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and who served with President Smith.

**Elder Ezra Taft Benson** said: "God bless the memory of President George Albert Smith. I am grateful beyond my words of expression for the close association which I have had with him in the last few years. I am grateful that my family has lived in the same ward and has come under the benign influence of his sweet spirit. I shall never cease to be grateful for the visits he made to my home

while I was serving as a humble missionary in the nations of war-torn Europe at the end of World War II. Particularly am I thankful for a visit in the still of the night when our little one lay at death's door. Without any announcement, President Smith found time to come into that home and place his hands upon the head of that little one, held in her mother's arms as she had been for many hours, and promise her complete recovery. This was President Smith, he always had time to help, particularly those who were sick, those who needed him most" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1951, 46).

**Elder Spencer W. Kimball** said: "It seemed to me that every act, every thought of our President would indicate that with all of his heart and soul he loved the Lord, and loved his fellowmen. Is there a mortal being who could have loved them more?" (*Church News*, Apr. 11, 1951, 11).

President George Albert Smith stood six feet tall. He was energetic and enjoyed many sports. He was known for his kindness and his ability to help people feel comfortable. He fulfilled the great commandments to love God and man. The world would today be a more blessed place if people had followed the example of his magnificent life and given ear to his loving counsels. Imagine what blessings might have then come to the nations of the earth.



President George Albert Smith



# David O. McKay

## Ninth President of the Church

9

### Highlights in the Life of David O. McKay

Age	Events
	He was born September 8, 1873, in Huntsville, Weber County, Utah, to David and Jennette Eveline Evans McKay.
3	President Brigham Young died (Aug. 29, 1877).
23	He was president and valedictorian of his graduating class at the University of Utah (June 1897).
23–25	He served a mission to Scotland (1897–99).
27	He married Emma Ray Riggs (Jan. 2, 1901).
32	He was ordained an Apostle by President Joseph F. Smith (Apr. 9, 1906).
44	His first book, <i>Ancient Apostles</i> , was published (1917).
45	He became general superintendent of the Sunday School (1918–34).
46–48	He was Church Commissioner of Education (1919–21).
47	He saw a vision of a celestial city during a world tour (May 10, 1921).
49–51	He served as president of the European Mission (1922–24).
61	He was a counselor to President Heber J. Grant (Oct. 6, 1934; he later served as a counselor to President George Albert Smith; May 21, 1945).
77	He was sustained as President of the Church (Apr. 9, 1951).
78	He visited nine European countries (1952).
82	He dedicated the Bern Switzerland Temple (Sept. 11, 1955); he dedicated the Los Angeles California Temple (Mar. 11, 1956).
84	He dedicated the Hamilton New Zealand Temple and the Church College of New Zealand (Apr. 20, 1958); he dedicated the London England Temple (Sept. 7, 1958).
85	He dedicated the Church College of Hawaii (Dec. 1958); he issued his well-known statement “Every Member a Missionary” (Apr. 1959).
88	He announced that members of the First Council of the Seventy were to be ordained high priests; Church correlation began (1961).
90	The home teaching program was introduced (Jan. 1964).
91	He dedicated the Oakland California Temple (Nov. 17, 1964).
94	He called the first regional representatives of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (1967).
96	He died in Salt Lake City, Utah (Jan. 18, 1970).



The McKay family, about 1878. David O. is sitting on his father's lap.

## He Had Important Responsibilities at an Early Age [9.1]

When David Oman McKay was born on September 8, 1873, Brigham Young was the President of the Church. He learned the virtue of hard work from his father, who was a farmer. Faith in the gospel was ingrained in his heart by the precepts, example, and endurance he saw in his family.



Young David O. McKay, about age five

The McKay (or MacKay) clan originated in the northern highlands of Scotland. There was a royalty of character in this lineage. David's grandparents and parents demonstrated in their conversion to the Church an unswerving loyalty to the gospel.

"When [David O. McKay] was eight years of age, his father received a call to go on a mission. To accept such a call for two or three

years away from home was no easy decision to make. Another baby was on its way, and plans had been made to enlarge the house and furnishings. The responsibilities of running the farm were too great to be left to his wife, so when David showed the letter calling him to a mission, he said: 'Of course it is impossible for me to go.' Jennette read the letter, looked at her husband, and said decisively: 'Of course you must accept; you need not worry about me. David O. and I will manage things nicely!' . . .

" . . . In the absence of his father, the boy David quickly redirected his energies to chores and farm work. Circumstances thus helped to produce a maturity beyond his physical years" (Llewelyn R. McKay, *Home Memories of President David O. McKay* [1956], 5–6).

Shortly before his 14th birthday he received a patriarchal blessing. In it he was told: "Thou art in thy youth and need instruction, therefore I say unto thee, be taught of thy parents the way of life and salvation, that at an early day you may be prepared for a responsible position, for the eye of the Lord is upon thee. . . . The Lord has a work for thee to do, in which thou shalt see much of the world, assist in gathering scattered Israel and also labor in the ministry. It shall be thy lot to sit in council with thy brethren and preside among the people and exhort the Saints to faithfulness" (quoted in Jeanette McKay Morrell, *Highlights in the Life of President David O. McKay* [1966], 26).

## He Learned About Revelation When He Was Young [9.2]

**President David O. McKay** shared the following story from his childhood:

"Since childhood it has been very easy for me to believe in the reality of the visions of the Prophet Joseph Smith. What I am going to say may seem very simple to you, but to me it is a heart petal.

"When a very young child in the home of my youth, I was fearful at night. I traced it back to a vivid dream in which two Indians came into the yard. I ran to the house for protection, and one of them shot an arrow and hit me in the back. Only a dream, but I felt that blow, and I was very much frightened, for in the dream they entered . . . and sneered and frightened mother.

"I never got over it. Adding to that were the fears of mother, for when father was away with the herd or on some mission, mother would never retire without looking under the bed, so burglars or men who might enter the house and try to take advantage of mother and the young children were real to me.

"Whatever the conditions, I was very much frightened. One night I could not sleep, and I fancied I heard noises around the house. . . . I became terribly wrought in my feeling, and I decided to pray as my parents had taught me.

"I thought I could pray only by getting out of bed and kneeling, and that was a terrible test. But I did finally bring myself to get out of bed and kneel and pray to God to protect mother and the family. And a voice as clearly



University of Utah football team, 1894. David O. McKay is in the back row, second from the left.

to me as mine is to you, said, 'Don't be afraid. Nothing will hurt you.' Where it came from, what it was, I am not saying. You may judge. To me it was a direct answer and there came an assurance that I should never be hurt in bed at night.

"I say it has been easy for me to understand and believe the reality of the visions of the Prophet Joseph. It was easy for me in youth to accept his vision, the appearance of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ to the boy praying. I thought of nothing else. Of course that is real. It was easy for me to believe that Moroni came to him there in the room. Heavenly beings were real from my babyhood on, and as years came those impressions strengthened by reason and strengthened by the inspiration of God directly to my soul" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1951, 182–83).

**President McKay** later said:

"The older I grow the more grateful I am for my parents, for how they lived the gospel in that old country home. . . . Both father and mother lived the gospel.

". . . My testimony of the reality of the existence of God dates back to that home when I was a child, and it was through their teachings and their examples that I received then the knowledge of the reality of the spiritual world; and I testify that it is a reality. . . .

"It is . . . easy for me to realize that one may so live that he may receive impressions and direct messages through the Holy Ghost. The veil is thin between those who hold the Priesthood and those on the other side of the veil. That testimony began . . . in the home in my youth because of the example of a father who honored the Priesthood—and his wife, who sustained him and lived it in the home" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1960, 85–86).

## He Served a Mission for the Lord [9.3]

When he was 21, David O. McKay entered the University of Utah, where he debated, played the piano in a musical group, played on the football team, and met Emma Ray Riggs, whom he later married. He graduated in 1897 as president and valedictorian of his class and was offered a teaching position. He also received a call to serve a mission.

The call of the Lord to serve as a missionary may have come at an inconvenient time, but he left all that was dear to him and went to his ancestral Scotland. His natural leadership was recognized and he was called to serve as a district president.



David O. McKay received his mission call to Scotland and was set apart on August 1, 1897.

## "Act Well Thy Part" [9.4]

While serving in Stirling, Scotland, **David O. McKay** had an experience that affected the remainder of his life. He and his companion had been in the town for a few weeks, but had had little success. They spent part of a day walking around Stirling Castle and Elder McKay was feeling homesick. He later recalled:

"As we returned to the town, I saw an unfinished building standing back from the sidewalk several yards. Over the front door was a stone arch, something unusual in a residence, and what was still more unusual, I could see from the sidewalk that there was an inscription chiseled in that arch.

"I said to my companion: 'That's unusual! I am going to see what the inscription is.' When I approached near enough, this message came to me, not only in stone, but as if it came



The inscription that became David O. McKay's life motto. The original stone is now in the Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City, Utah.

from One in whose service we were engaged: ‘Whate’er Thou Art, Act Well Thy Part.’

“I turned and walked thoughtfully away, and when I reached my companion I repeated the message to him.

“That was a message to me that morning to act my part well as a missionary of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is merely another way of saying . . . ‘Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.’ (Matt. 7:21.)”



David O. and his sister Jeanette in 1897 when he graduated from the University of Utah as valedictorian of his class

(*Cherished Experiences from the Writings of David O. McKay*, comp. Clare Middlemiss [1955], 174–75). He resolved that he would act well the part of a committed missionary.

In 1955, as President of the Church, he revisited the same spot and shared the story with those who were there. The stone was later acquired by the Church and is now in the David O. McKay exhibit in the Museum of History and Art next to Temple Square.

## His Leadership Abilities Were Recognized [9.5]

In a May 29, 1899, meeting presided over by James L. McMurrin of the European Mission Presidency, Elder David O. McKay and the other missionaries experienced a strong outpouring of the Spirit. On that occasion President McMurrin prophesied concerning several elders, and to the young Elder McKay he said, “Let me say to you, Brother David, Satan has desired you that he may sift you as wheat, but God is mindful of you, and if you will keep the faith, you will yet sit in the leading councils of the Church” (quoted in Morrell, *Highlights in the Life*, 37–38).

## He Found an Eternal Companion [9.6]

On returning home from his mission in Scotland in August 1899, David O. McKay began teaching at the Weber Stake Academy. On January 2, 1901, he married Emma Ray in the Salt Lake Temple. It was a union that would be an example to the entire Church for over 69

years. Their love and concern for each other was well recognized by Church members. The McKays became the parents of seven children.

Before their marriage, **David McKay** often wrote letters to Emma Ray. The following letter, dated December 18, 1900, is an example. He wrote:

“My Dearest Sweetheart,

*I will be happy, I will be true,*

*When I am married, Sweetheart, to you.*

“These words have been in my mind ever since they were repeated to me to-day. It is true they just form the rhyme of a simple love song, yet they express the sentiments of my heart to-night, and in so doing contain a deeper import than the author ever intended. If I am true to you before we are married, it will be much easier after. . . .

“It seems a week since I saw you, and it seems about two days since I was last in school. If this feeling continues, it will be eight weeks before I see you again! Every day is a week when I am away from you, every day is but an hour when I am with you! What but *Love* can make Time drag so in the first instance, and make it pass unconsciously in the other?

“Yes, it’s love—true love, and I feel thankful that I know what pure love is, and that the person whom I love is the truest, sweetest girl that lives.

“Sweetheart, is such a love any comfort to you? If it is, try to reciprocate it and give perfect happiness to your loving Dade” (quoted in David Lawrence McKay, *My Father, David O. McKay* [1989], 8).



After his mission, he accepted a position at Weber Stake Academy and began teaching there in September 1899. After two and a half years he was appointed principal of the school. Pictured is David O. McKay with members of the student body in 1905.



David O. and Emma Ray McKay with their son David Lawrence

## He Was Called to Be an Apostle [9.7]

In 1906, while David O. McKay was serving in the superintendency of the Weber Stake Sunday School, President Joseph F. Smith called him to serve as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. David was then 32 years old. His ministry in the Quorum of the Twelve would cover more than half a century. His talents as an educator were called upon immediately. He served as a counselor in the general Church Sunday School and became Church Commissioner of Education in 1919. To him, teaching was the highest of the professions.



An Apostle at 32 years of age, April 1906

In his first address as an Apostle, **Elder David O.**

**McKay** taught: "The man who knows what his duty is and fails to perform it, is not true to himself; he is not true to his brethren; he is not living in the light which God and conscience provides. That is where we stand, and it comes right home to you; it means me. When my conscience tells me that it is right to go along in a specified line, I am not true to myself if I do not follow that. Oh! I know we are swayed by our weaknesses, and by influences from without; but it is our duty to walk in the straight and narrow path in the performance of every duty. And mark this: Every time we have opportunity and fail to live up to that truth which is within us, every time we fail to express a good thought, every time we fail to perform a good act, we weaken ourselves, and make it more difficult to express that thought or perform that act in the future. Every time we perform a good act, every time we express a noble feeling we make it the more

easy to perform that act or express that feeling another time" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1906, 113).

## He Had an Unfortunate Accident [9.8]

In 1916, Elder David O. McKay suffered a severe automobile accident. His face was so badly lacerated that many felt he would be disfigured for life. President Heber J. Grant, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, blessed him that he would be completely healed, and he was.

## He Went on a World Tour during 1920–21 [9.9]

In December 1920, Elder David O. McKay left on an unprecedented world tour. Before he left, he received a blessing significant to this tour with Hugh J. Cannon, editor of the *Improvement Era*. "Presidents Heber J. Grant, Anthon H. Lund, and Charles W. Penrose, and several of the Apostles laid their hands upon President McKay's head and blessed him and set him apart as 'a missionary to travel around the world' and promised him that he should be 'warned of dangers seen and unseen, and be given wisdom and inspiration from God to avoid all the snares and the pitfalls that may be laid for his feet'; that he should also 'go forth in peace, in pleasure and happiness and to return in safety to his loved ones and to the body of the Church,' he has experienced the protecting care of our Heavenly Father in all his global ministry" (Clare Middlemiss, comp., in McKay, *Cherished Experiences*, 37).

Elder McKay visited the Orient and, with apostolic authority, dedicated China for the preaching of the gospel. While in the Pacific Islands, Tahitian Saints were able to understand his words in their own language. Being forewarned of danger in Hawaii, he moved off a platform he was standing on, which collapsed and fell. While in the ancient Holy Land of Israel, he prophesied



On his world tour with Hugh J. Cannon

that although the land would run red with blood, the Jews would yet be gathered. This tour gave the young Apostle a world vision, and the universality of the gospel message became even more apparent.

### He Had an Inspired Dream [9.10]

While on his world tour, **Elder David O. McKay** had a marvelous dream. He wrote:

“I . . . fell asleep, and beheld in vision something infinitely sublime. In the distance I beheld a beautiful white city. Though far away, yet I seemed to realize that trees with luscious fruit, shrubbery with gorgeously-tinted leaves, and flowers in perfect bloom abounded everywhere. The clear sky above seemed to reflect these beautiful shades of color. I then saw a great concourse of people approaching the city. Each one wore a white flowing robe, and a white headdress. Instantly my attention seemed centered upon their Leader, and though I could see only the profile of his features and his body, I recognized him at once as my Savior! The tint and radiance of his countenance were glorious to behold! There was a peace about him which seemed sublime—it was divine!

“The city, I understood, was his. It was the City Eternal; and the people following him were to abide there in peace and eternal happiness.

“But who were they?

“As if the Savior read my thoughts, he answered by pointing to a semicircle that then appeared above them, and on which were written in gold the words:

“*“These Are They Who Have Overcome The World—Who Have Truly Been Born Again!”*

“When I awoke, it was breaking day” (*Cherished Experiences*, 102).



Hugh J. Cannon and Elder McKay at the sphinx and the pyramids of Cheops, October 26, 1921



The McKay family during Elder McKay's 1922–24 European mission

### He Experienced the Gift of Interpretation of Tongues [9.11]

**President David O. McKay** later shared the following experience he had with a gift of the Spirit during his world tour:

“One of the most important events on my world tour of the missions of the Church was the gift of interpretation of the English tongue to the Saints of New Zealand, at a session of their conference, held on the 23rd day of April, 1921, at Puke Tapu Branch, Waikato District, Huntly, New Zealand.

“The service was held in a large tent, beneath the shade of which hundreds of earnest men and women gathered in anxious anticipation of seeing and hearing an Apostle of the Church, the first one to visit that land.

“When I looked over that vast assemblage and contemplated the great expectations that filled the hearts of all who had met together, I realized how inadequately I might satisfy the ardent desires of their souls, and I yearned, most earnestly, for the gift of tongues that I might be able to speak to them in their native language.

“Until that moment I had not given much serious thought to the gift of tongues, but on that occasion, I

wished with all my heart, that I might be worthy of that divine power.

"In other missions I had spoken through an interpreter but, able as all interpreters are, I nevertheless felt hampered, in fact, somewhat inhibited, in presenting my message.

"Now, I faced an audience that had assembled with unusual expectations, and I then realized, as never before, the great responsibility of my office. From the depth of my soul, I prayed for divine assistance.

"When I arose to give my address, I said to Brother Stuart Meha, our interpreter, that I would speak without his translating, sentence by sentence, what I said, and then to the audience I continued:

"I wish, oh, how I wish I had the power to speak to you in your own tongue, that I might tell you what is in my heart; but since I have not the gift, I pray, and I ask you to pray, that you might have the spirit of interpretation, of discernment, that you may understand at least the spirit while I am speaking, and then you will get the words and the thought when Brother Meha interprets."

"My sermon lasted forty minutes, and I have never addressed a more attentive, a more respectful audience. My listeners were in perfect rapport—this I knew when I saw tears in their eyes. Some of them at least, perhaps most of them, who did not understand English, had the gift of interpretation" (*Cherished Experiences*, 73–74).

## He Was Called to the First Presidency [9.12]

President Heber J. Grant called Elder David O. McKay to be a counselor in the First Presidency in 1934. President McKay later served as a counselor to President George Albert Smith.

## He Became President of the Church [9.13]

**President McKay** was sustained as the ninth President of the Church during general conference on April 9, 1951. On that day, he said:

"It is just one week ago today that the realization came to me that this responsibility of leadership would probably fall upon my shoulders. . . .

"When that reality came, as I tell you, I was deeply moved. And I am today, and pray that I may, even though inadequately, be able to tell you how weighty this responsibility seems.

"The Lord has said that the three presiding high priests chosen by the body, appointed and ordained to this office of presidency, are to be 'upheld by the confidence,



David O. McKay

faith, and prayer of the Church' [D&C 107:22]. No one can preside over this Church without first being in tune with the head of the Church, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He is our head. This is his Church. Without his divine guidance and constant inspiration, we cannot succeed. With his guidance, with his inspiration, we cannot fail.

"Next to that as a sustaining potent power, comes the confidence, faith, prayers, and united support of the Church.

"I pledge to you that I shall do my best so to live as to merit the companionship of the Holy Spirit, and pray here in your presence that my counselors and I may indeed be 'partakers of the divine spirit'" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1951, 157).

Soon after being called as the prophet, he set out on a tour of missions around the world. He eventually traveled over a million miles, traversing the earth like a modern Paul. Missionary work accelerated as every member was encouraged to be a missionary. Thousands of chapels were built during his presidency. Because he was President of the Church for 19 years, a majority of Church members had known no other prophet than David O. McKay.

President McKay knew the Lord wanted His Saints to grow spiritually. He often spoke of developing our divine nature. He also often spoke of the family and the home. He indelibly impressed upon the minds of the Saints the statement "No other success can compensate for failure in the home" (quoting James Edward McCulloch, in Conference Report, Apr. 1935, 116). He often proclaimed that next in importance to life itself was the priceless boon of agency and that the Constitution of the United States must be defended.

## He Received a Birthday Tribute [9.14]

On President David O. McKay's 78th birthday, his first birthday as President of the Church, his colleagues of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, with whom he had served for 45 years, sent him a letter expressing their best wishes. In it they told him:

"Throughout your eventful life you have been an inspiration to young and old in the Church. Your humble yet brilliant career in the Lord's work has been a literal

fulfillment of the Savior's injunction in the Sermon on the Mount which guided a poet to say:

*Hold thy lighted lamp on high,  
Be a star in someone's sky*

"Your great devotion to the truth has instilled faith and confidence in the hearts of all who have followed you. Your tenderness and sympathy in times of trial have lifted dark clouds from those bowed down. Your courage to carry on the work in spite of all hindrances has been like a helping hand to many who otherwise might not have endured to the end.

"On this your natal day we pledge to you our love and devotion, our willingness to follow your inspired leadership, our gratitude for the privilege of serving the Lord in fellowship with you" (quoted in McKay, *Home Memories*, 251).



President McKay on his 78th birthday, 1951

## He Envisioned Temples throughout the World [9.15]

More temples were built during President David O. McKay's administration than during any previous administration. The number of temples built, however, is perhaps not as significant as their locations; temples began to be built throughout the world.

Llewelyn R. McKay, one of President McKay's sons, recorded the following incident, which occurred when his father was president of the European Mission in



The Bern Switzerland Temple was the first in Europe. It was dedicated by President McKay on September 11, 1955.

the 1920s: "Father had the vision of a temple being erected for the European members of the Church. I recall asking him if missionaries should persist in encouraging members to leave their homes and move to Zion. 'No,' he answered, 'it is important that the branches be built up, and members should remain and work toward that end. Someday we shall have temples built for them which will be accessible to all, so that the desired temple work can be done without uprooting families from their homelands'" (*Home Memories*, 33).

On another occasion, President McKay shared his vision of how a temple should be built. "The first temple built in Europe, the Swiss Temple represented President McKay's commitment to care for the spiritual needs of the Saints in the expanding church. . . .

"Furthermore, President McKay had evidently seen the temple in vision, its clean simple lines reminiscent of the Church's first temple at Kirtland. He described it so vividly to Edward O. Anderson, a Church architect, that he was able to reproduce it exactly. However, as the design process went on, the original drawing was modified until President McKay, upon seeing the drawings, pointed out, 'Brother Anderson, that is not the temple that you and I saw together.' The finished drawings, needless to say, reflected President McKay's original description" ("The Swiss Temple," *Ensign*, June 1978, 80).

## Preaching the Gospel Is a Worldwide Effort [9.16]

The following statements of **President David O. McKay** illustrate his commitment to spreading the gospel message throughout the world:

"And so with you I say, 'We are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.' I am looking upon a segment of the Church of Christ who share the responsibility of preaching this gospel to all the world, for we are part of a world-wide organization. This gospel is not confined to Utah, nor Idaho, nor Wyoming, nor California, nor the United States, nor just to Europe, but it is the power of God to salvation to all who believe, and you and I must share part of the responsibility of declaring it to all the world" (*Stepping Stones to an Abundant Life*, comp. Llewelyn R. McKay [1971], 120–21).

"The mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints may be considered in two great aspects: (1) the proclamation to the world of the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ—the declaration to all mankind that God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ appeared in this dispensation to the Prophet Joseph Smith; (2) the



Visit to New Zealand, January 1955

other great purpose of the Church is to translate truth into a better social order or, in other words, to make our religion effective in the individual lives of men and in improving social conditions" (*Man May Know for Himself: Teachings of President David O. McKay*, comp. Clare Middlemiss [1967], 162).

## The Saints Should Be Pioneers in a Modern World [9.17]

**President David O. McKay**, then a counselor in the First Presidency, was the chairman of the Utah Centennial Commission in 1947. It was appropriate that he play a leading part in honoring the pioneers of the past; his own life stretched back to Utah's beginnings.



President David O. McKay

He once said: "The best way to honor the pioneers is to emulate and make practical in our lives the ideals and virtues that strengthened and animated their lives. These eternal ideals and principles which they fostered and upheld, even under the most adverse conditions, are as applicable today as they were when emphasized by the pioneer leaders" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1947, 118).

## He Was Respected throughout the World

[9.18]

As President David O. McKay traveled throughout the world, his influence was felt in many places besides the immediate Church. One United States Secretary of State called him the best goodwill ambassador the United States had. Monarchs honored him. Presidents called upon him. Nations gave him their highest awards.

President McKay looked like a prophet even to those who were not Latter-day Saints. He was well known as the Mormon prophet and "December 1968, the name of President McKay was numbered among the top five church leaders listed in the public opinion poll released by Dr. George Gallup's Institute of Public Opinion" (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History*, 23rd ed. [1969], 556). Whether attending a reception hosted by Queen Elizabeth II of England or mingling with so-called commoners, President McKay stood out physically and spiritually.



President and Sister McKay

Arch L. Madsen, who was president of Bonneville International Corporation, shared this experience:

"I remember being in New York when President McKay returned from Europe. Arrangements had been made for pictures to be taken, but the regular photographer was unable to go, so in desperation the United Press picked their crime photographer—a man accustomed to the toughest type of work in New York. He went to the airport, stayed there two hours, and returned later from [the] dark room with a tremendous sheaf of pictures. He was supposed to take only two. His boss immediately chided him, 'What in the world are you wasting time and all those photographic supplies for?'"



President and Sister McKay with Elders Richard L. Evans and Spencer W. Kimball

"The photographer replied very curtly, saying he would gladly pay for the extra materials, and they could even dock him for the extra time he took. It was obvious that he was very touchy about it. Several hours later the vice-president called him to his office, wanting to learn what happened. The crime photographer said, 'When I was a little boy, my mother used to read to me out of the Old Testament, and all my life I have wondered what a prophet of God must really look like. Well, today I found one'" (quoted in "Memories of a Prophet," *Improvement Era*, Feb. 1970, 72).

## He Advanced Priesthood Correlation [9.19]

Basic priesthood correlation of the Church has always been an important concern of the prophets of God. In 1908, Elder David O. McKay, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, was called by President Joseph F. Smith to serve on a correlation committee. Later, as President of the Church, he supported and expanded the role of correlation. In October 1961, **Elder Harold B. Lee**, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, spoke of the need for Church correlation and explained President McKay's plan for an all-Church coordinating council. In his address he said:

"The repeated necessity for re-examination of the programs, the activities, and the prescribed courses of study has been apparent over the years to make certain that the original concepts relative to each organization were being adhered to, that each in its field was functioning up to its capacity, that one was not usurping the field of activity designed for the other, and that duplications and overlappings were reduced to a minimum. . . .

"This is a move, which, as I say, has lain close to President McKay's mind and now as the President of the Church he is instructing us to move forward, that we consolidate to make more efficient, and more effective the work of the priesthood, the auxiliaries, and the other units in order that we may conserve our time, our energy, and our efforts toward the prime purpose for which the Church itself has been organized" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1961, 78, 81).

During President McKay's administration the correlation program made significant advances. **President Joseph Fielding Smith** later wrote:

"During the early 1960s a broad program of Church correlation began under President McKay's direction to help bearers of the priesthood better fulfill their obligations and responsibilities. Four operating committees were formed to include programs of home teaching, missionary, genealogical, and welfare work. Worthy leaders of the priesthood were called to fill positions on these important general committees and to assist in preparing materials and outlines for leaders in the stakes and wards. Under the priesthood correlation program, quorums and groups were given specific leadership responsibilities. High priests were assigned genealogical work; seventies the missionary program; elders the welfare work; and all quorums the home teaching program. The former ward teaching program was greatly expanded into the new home teaching program, and those assigned as home teachers were given greater responsibilities as spiritual advisers to a group of families.

"An organized program of family home evenings was also introduced as part of the correlation program. A special manual of family lessons was published for every family in the Church, and outlines were offered on how to conduct successful family home evening instruction. Course offerings in all of the auxiliary organizations were



The First Presidency at the Los Angeles California Temple dedication, 1956

correlated so that a unified program of gospel learning is followed in all teaching organizations of the Church.

“The work of priesthood correlation and the new emphasis on family home evenings and home teaching brought a great surge of spiritual growth into the Church and marked a significant era in the Church in strengthening the homes and helping fathers and mothers take their rightful places as spiritual leaders of their children” (*Essentials in Church History*, 26th ed. [1950], 543).

## He Set an Example in His Home [9.20]

President David O. McKay spoke with authority on marriage and the family and on the noble role of women. His own marriage stretched over 69 years and was looked on as a model in the Church. The testimony of his son Robert R. McKay expressed the appropriateness of such a man to receive a prophetic call:



President McKay with his wife, Emma, at the piano, January 2, 1951

“As my father, he has my love and devotion, and I echo the thoughts of my brothers and sisters. As the President of the Church, and as a prophet of our Heavenly Father, he has my obedience as a member of the priesthood, and my sustaining vote.

“I can say this, and act as a personal witness, because in all of my years of close association in the home, on the farm, in business, in the Church, there has never been shown to me one action nor one word, even while training a self-

willed horse, which would throw any doubt in my mind that he should be and finally did become the representative and prophet of our Heavenly Father. I leave you that personal witness” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1967, 84).

## The Home Is Central to the Gospel [9.21]

**President David O. McKay** often taught of the importance of a strong family in the gospel plan:

“One of our most precious possessions is our families. The domestic relations precede, and, in our present existence, are worth more than all other social ties. They give the first throb to the heart and unseal the deep fountains of its love. Home is the chief school of human virtues. Its

responsibilities, joys, sorrows, smiles, tears, hopes, and solicitudes form the chief interests of human life. . . .

“[Quoting James Edward McCulloch:] When one puts business or pleasure above his home, he that moment starts on the downgrade to soul-weakness. When the club becomes more attractive to any man than his home, it is time for him to confess in bitter shame that he has failed to measure up to the supreme opportunity of his life and flunked in the final test of true manhood. No other success can compensate for failure in the home. The poorest shack in which love prevails over a united family is of greater value to God and future humanity than any other riches. In such a home God can work miracles and will work miracles.

“Pure hearts in a pure home are always in whispering distance of heaven. [End of quote.]

“In the light of scripture, ancient and modern we are justified in concluding that Christ’s ideal pertaining to marriage is the unbroken home” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1964, 5).



At home with family

## He Gave Ten Conditions That Can Contribute to a Happy Home [9.22]

**President McKay** gave the following advice for a happy home:

1. Ever keep in mind you begin to lay the foundation of a happy home in your pre-marital lives. While in courtship you should learn to be loyal and true to your future husband or wife. Keep yourselves clean and pure. Cherish the highest ideals of chastity and purity. Do not be deceived.



Family sleigh ride, about 1954

- "2. Choose your mate by judgment and inspiration, as well as by physical attraction. Intellect and breeding are vital and important in the human family.
- "3. Approach marriage with the lofty view it merits. Marriage is ordained of God. It is not something to be entered into lightly or to be dissolved at the first difficulty that arises.
- "4. Remember that the noblest purpose of marriage is procreation. Home is children's natural nursery. Happiness in the home is enhanced by having children at the fireside.
- "5. Let the spirit of reverence pervade the home. Have your home such that if the Savior called unexpectedly he could be invited to stay and not feel out of his element. Pray in the home.
- "6. Let husband or wife never speak in loud tones to each other.
- "7. Learn the value of self-control. We are never sorry for the word unspoken. Lack of self-control is the greatest source of unhappiness in the home. Children should be taught self-control, self-respect, and respect for others.
- "8. Fasten home ties by continued companionship. Companionship fosters love. Do everything to cement love for all eternity.
- "9. Make accessible to children proper literature and music.
- "10. By example and precept, encourage participation in Church activity.



At home in Huntsville, Utah, about 1947

"This is fundamental in developing a true character. Church activity should be led, not directed by parents" (quoted in McKay, *Home Memories*, 213).

## The Saints Must Build the Stakes of Zion Where They Live [9.23]

In May 1952, President David O. McKay left on a two-month tour of Europe. "President McKay told an inquiring audience that the main purpose of his trip was to investigate the possibility of setting up chapels throughout Europe—to encourage Church members to remain at home and not to emigrate to America" (Morrell, *Highlights in the Life*, 121). During that trip he selected sites for temples in England and Switzerland, the first in Europe.



President McKay loved children, and they loved him.

## He Loved Great Literature [9.24]

President David O. McKay was formally educated and had a love for the great authors and writers of the English language. When he taught the gospel he often quoted Shakespeare, Carlisle, or Robert Burns. His talent as a teacher was evident and he communicated not only to the Church but to much of the world.

## He Had the Gift of Healing [9.25]

In a 1954 letter to Elder Mark E. Petersen, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, a man told of a sacred experience a friend had with President David O. McKay in one of the temples. He wrote:

"My wife is a counselor in the Relief Society of our ward, and Sister Nina Penrod is the other counselor. As President McKay shook Sister Penrod's hand, she asked him if he remembered her mother, a Sister Graham from Ogden Valley. He answered: 'Why, of course I do,' and placed his left hand on top of her hand as he clasped it in his right. At the moment of the handshake I saw Sister Penrod's face flush. She said she became overwhelmed and humble, more because as both of President McKay's hands were on her right hand, she felt a shock, and she wondered if others might have heard the sound that



President David O. McKay

accompanied the shock which had seemed very loud to her. She said a weakness came over her. And this is odd, as President McKay held her right hand with his left hand, he shook hands with many others with his right hand. Sister Penrod said it was very humbling in the extreme to her, yet she felt elated because something wonderful had happened to her, for her arthritis pains were all gone. . . .

“When President McKay

left, as it was told to me, Sister Penrod tried to leave with the others but had to be assisted as she was too weak to go alone. They proceeded slowly, and in descending the stairs she cried out, sinking down. She was helped to a bed in the dressing room where after a short time her strength returned, and she stood up, turned her back to those with her, and reached each arm up her back touching her shoulder blades, saying, ‘I haven’t been able to do this for years’” (quoted in McKay, *Cherished Experiences*, 156–57).

## He Opened the Eyes of a Blind Man [9.26]

Brother Melvin T. Mickelson told of how he regained his eyesight after receiving a blessing from President David O. McKay. Brother Mickelson had contracted a serious eye infection and had lost the sight in one eye and most of the sight in the other. The condition of his eyes continued to get worse until the doctor told him the right eye would need to be removed. Brother Mickelson explained:

“About two hours after we had left the doctor’s office, President McKay came to our door and told us he had heard of my sickness and wondered if I would like a blessing. No one could deny the feeling of peace which came with him. As he blessed me, the pain eased and then left me. As President McKay left the room, my wife’s words of faith were, ‘You will be all right.’ . . .

“The next morning I returned to the doctor’s office. After examining my eyes, he said, ‘Some miracle has happened. We won’t have to remove that eye. Why, you will receive fifteen to twenty percent of your eyesight.’ The next day he told me seventy-five percent of my vision would come back, and on the third day, perhaps all of my vision. . . .

“Two or three years later, an eye specialist looked at my eyes and said, ‘You have a lot of scar-tissue in your eyes, but I have never seen more perfect vision’” (quoted in McKay, *Cherished Experiences*, 163–64).

## He Had the Gift of Discernment [9.27]

**Bishop Robert L. Simpson**, then a counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, told of his first introduction to President McKay in 1958, at the dedication of the Hamilton New Zealand Temple:

“I was walking down a hallway in the temple when a friend intercepted me and invited me to step inside a room. I was overwhelmed to notice that the only other people in the room were President and Sister McKay. My friend said, ‘President McKay, this is one of our returned New Zealand missionaries, Brother Simpson.’ The President extended his firm right hand, and placing his left hand on my shoulder, looked into my eyes and, more than that, into every fiber of my being. After a few seconds, he gave my hand a friendly pump, my shoulder a squeeze, and said, ‘Brother Simpson, I am pleased to *know* you.’ Not ‘I am pleased to *meet* you,’ but ‘pleased to *know* you.’ During the ensuing days and weeks, the memory of this introduction kept recurring.

Approximately three months later, while sitting in my office in Los Angeles, my telephone rang and the voice on the other end of the line said, ‘This is David O. McKay speaking.’ He said that based on our interview, he had felt impressed to issue a call to return with my family to New Zealand to preside over the people I loved so much” (*Improvement Era*, Feb. 1970, 72).



President McKay receiving scouting’s silver buffalo, with Elder Ezra Taft Benson

## The Power of God Was with Him [9.28]

On one occasion in the South Pacific as he left a group of Saints, he gave them a blessing and a remarkable thing happened. As one man reported: “It is the testimony of some who cast their eyes upward momentarily as inspired words flowed in great power from Elder McKay’s lips that a halo of brightness rested upon him like a shaft of white light, and certain it is that the borderland of heaven and earth rested in close proximity to the spot where was

given this wonderful manifestation and blessing. Each listener's soul throbbed with the conviction of the truth" (quoted in McKay, *Cherished Experiences*, 67).

In a tribute to her husband, Sister McKay said of him:

"The President is blessed with pre-vision. Many a morning he has told me that certain incidents would happen during the day and invariably the impression would become a reality. This pre-vision has been a helpful guide to him through life" (quoted in McKay, *Home Memories*, 270).



President McKay with U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower

## Every Person Wields an Influence [9.29]

**President David O. McKay** taught about the importance of living a Christlike life:

"An upright character is the result only of continued effort and right thinking, the effect of long-cherished associations with Godlike thoughts. He approaches nearest the Christ spirit who makes God the center of his thoughts; and he who can say in his heart, 'Not my will, but thine be done,' approaches most nearly the Christ ideal" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1953, 10).

"Every man and every person who lives in this world wields an influence, whether for good or for evil. It is not what he says alone, it is not alone what he does. It is what he is. Every man, every person radiates what he or she is. Every person is a recipient of radiation. The Savior was conscious of that. Whenever he came into the presence of an individual, he sensed that radiation—whether it was the woman of Samaria with her past life; whether it was the woman who was to be stoned or the men who were to stone her; whether it was the statesman, Nicodemus, or one of the lepers. He was conscious of the radiation from the individual. And to

a degree so are you, and so am I. It is what we are and what we radiate that affects the people around us" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1963, 129).

## He Taught about Developing Spirituality [9.30]

**President David O. McKay** taught the following about developing spirituality:

"Spirituality is the highest acquisition of the soul, 'the divine in man—the supreme crowning gift that makes him king of all created things.' It is the consciousness of victory over self, and of communion with the Infinite. To acquire more and more power, to feel one's faculties unfolding, and one's soul in harmony with God and with the Infinite—that is spirituality. It is that alone which really gives one the best in life.

"Spirituality is best manifested in doing, not in dreaming. 'Rapturous day dreams, flights of heavenly fancy, longings to see the invisible, are not so impressive as the plain doing of duty.'

"Every noble impulse, every unselfish expression of love, every brave suffering for the right; every surrender of self to something higher than self; every loyalty to an ideal; every unselfish devotion to principle; every helpfulness to humanity; every act of self-control; every fine courage of the soul, undefeated by pretense or policy; every being, doing, and living of good for the very good's sake—that is spiritual.

"This feeling about a higher life is universal. The search for, and development of, spiritual peace and freedom concerns everyone.



President and Sister McKay with filmmaker Cecil B. DeMille and motion picture actor Charlton Heston as Moses while filming the motion picture *The Ten Commandments*. Brigham Young University presented DeMille with an honorary doctorate degree in May 1957.

"You lose the soul unless you develop spirituality within. I would advocate these steps in the development of spirituality:

"1. It is man's duty to become master of nature—not its slave. Self-control, and control of environment, are important.

"2. Spirituality and the abundant life are dependent upon acknowledgment of Deity, and upon honor for the Godhead.

"3. There must be the consciousness that God has delegated to man the authority to act in God's name.

"4. There must be a realization that God is the Father of all men, and that He values each soul.

"5. Life is a mission, and it is the duty of every man to make the world better for his having been in it" (*True to the Faith: From the Sermons and Discourses of David O. McKay*, comp. Llewelyn R. McKay [1966], 244–45).

## He Taught about the Cornerstones of Zion [9.31]

**President David O. McKay** taught:

"The Zion we build will pattern after the ideals of its inhabitants. To change men and the world we must change their thinking, for the thing which a man really believes is the thing which he has really thought; that which he actually thinks is the thing which he lives. Men do not go beyond their ideals; they often fall short of them, but they never go beyond them. . . .

" . . . The Lord designates Zion as ' . . . the pure in heart . . . ' (D. & C. 97:21); and only when we are such, and only when we have such shall Zion ' . . . flourish, and the glory of the Lord shall be upon her.' (*Ibid.*, 64:41.)

"The foundation of Zion then will be laid in the hearts of men; broad acres, mines, forests, factories, beautiful buildings, modern conveniences, will be but means and accessories to the building of the human soul and the securing of happiness.

"Let us then as we draw our plans for Zion today choose what we may call the 'four cornerstones of Zion's inhabitants.'



President McKay with U.S. President John F. Kennedy

"*First*: A firm belief and acceptance of the truth that this universe is governed by intelligence and wisdom, and, as Plato said, ' . . . is not left to the guidance of an irrational and random chance.'

"The *second* cornerstone is that the ultimate purpose in God's great plan is the perfecting of the individual.

"It is his desire that men and women become like himself.

"The *third* cornerstone is a realization that the first and most essential thing in man's progress is freedom—*free agency*. Man can choose the highest good, or choose the lowest good and fall short of what he was intended to be.

"The *fourth* cornerstone is a sense of responsibility toward other individuals and the social group" (*Gospel Ideals*, 335).

## He Had Faith in the Youth of Zion [9.32]

**President David O. McKay** rejoiced at the faithfulness of the youth of the Church. During the April 1961 general conference, he said:

"If the question were asked this morning, 'In what respect during the last year has the Church made the most commendable progress?' I would not answer: '*In financial matters.*' . . .

"I would not say: '*In the increase of the number of new houses of worship.*' . . .

" . . . I would not answer: '*In the increased membership.*' . . .

"I would answer that *the most encouraging progress of the Church during the last year is seen in the increased number of young people participating in Church activity.* . . .

"Heaven guide you, our Youth, wherever you are. As long as you will keep yourselves pure and spotless and prayerfully and earnestly keep close to your Father in heaven, his Spirit will guide you, magnify you in your youth, and make you a power on the earth for good. Your Father in heaven is ever ready to give you help in time of need and give you comfort and strength if you will approach him in purity, simplicity, and faith" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1961, 5, 8).



President McKay on a park bench at 84 years old, about 1957



President and Sister McKay—"Sharing the golden years"

## President Joseph Fielding Smith Paid Him a Tribute [9.33]

In later years, though restricted physically by failing health, President David O. McKay continued to grow spiritually. He often spoke of a zest for life. After President McKay's death on January 18, 1970, **President Joseph Fielding Smith** said:

"I honor and revere the name and the memory of President David O. McKay.

"For 60 years I sat by his side in the presiding councils of the Church. I came to know him intimately and well, and I loved him as a man and honored him as a prophet.

"He was a true servant of the Lord—one who walked uprightly before his Maker; one who loved his

fellowmen; one who enjoyed life and rejoiced in the privilege of service that was his; one who served with an eye single to the glory of God.

"He exemplified perfectly the Old Testament standard: '... what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' (Mic. 6:8.)



A birthday kiss, June 21, 1963

"As stated editorially in the *Deseret News*: 'If ever a man of modern history left his world better for having lived in it, that man was David Oman McKay.

"'Wherever he passed, men lifted their heads with more hope and courage. Wherever his voice was heard, there followed greater kindness among men, greater tolerance, greater love. Wherever his influence was felt, man and God became closer in purpose and in action.'

"President McKay was called to the holy apostleship in April 1906 by my father, President Joseph F. Smith, who acted under the inspiration of the Spirit, and he became one of the greatest and most inspired leaders of this dispensation. . . .

"I shall miss him greatly. It does not seem possible that he has left us. But we know he has gone to a joyous reunion with his father and mother and that he is now taking up his labors in the paradise of God as he begins to associate anew with his good friends who preceded him into the realms ahead. . . .



The First Presidency: Hugh B. Brown, David O. McKay, and N. Eldon Tanner

“To my mind two statements made by the prophet Lehi exemplify the life of President McKay. He was like a great river, ‘continually running into the fountain of all righteousness,’ and he was like a mighty valley, ‘firm and steadfast, and immovable in keeping the commandments of the Lord!’ (1 Ne. 2:9–10.)

“I thank God for the life and ministry of this great man. He was a soul set apart, a great spirit who came here to preside in Israel. He did his work well and has returned clean and perfected to the realms of light and joyous reunion. If ever there was a man to whom these words of scriptural benediction might well be said, it was President McKay:

“‘Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world’ (Matt. 25:34), for ye did all things well that were entrusted unto thy care” (“One Who Loved His Fellowmen,” *Improvement Era*, Feb. 1970, 87–88).



President David O. McKay



# Joseph Fielding Smith

Tenth President of the Church

# 10

## Highlights in the Life of Joseph Fielding Smith

Age	Events
	He was born July 19, 1876, in Salt Lake City, Utah, to Joseph F. and Julina Lambson Smith.
8	He was baptized by his father (July 19, 1884).
19	He received his patriarchal blessing, which stated that he would preside among the people (Jan. 1896).
21	He married Louie Emily Shurtliff (Apr. 26, 1898; she died Mar. 30, 1908).
22–24	He served a mission to England (1899–1901).
24	He began working in the Church Historian’s Office (1901).
29	He became Assistant Church Historian (Apr. 1906).
32	He married Ethel Georgina Reynolds (Nov. 2, 1908; she died Aug. 26, 1937).
33	He was ordained an Apostle by his father, President Joseph F. Smith (Apr. 7, 1910).
44	He became Church Historian (1921).
45	His first book, <i>Essentials in Church History</i> , was published (1922).
57	He became president of the Genealogical Society (1934).
61	He married Jessie Ella Evans (Apr. 12, 1938; she died Aug. 3, 1971).
63	He directed the evacuation of missionaries from Europe (1939).
68–72	He became president of the Salt Lake Temple (1945–49).
74	He was sustained as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (Apr. 9, 1951).
79	He dedicated four countries for the preaching of the gospel (1955).
89	He became a counselor to President David O. McKay (Oct. 29, 1965).
93	He became President of the Church (Jan. 23, 1970).
95	He presided over the first area conference, in Manchester, England (Aug. 27–29, 1971); he dedicated the Ogden Utah Temple (Jan. 18, 1972); he dedicated the Provo Utah Temple (Feb. 9, 1972); he died in Salt Lake City, Utah (July 2, 1972).

## His Mother Prayed for a Son [10.1]

Like Hannah, mother of the Old Testament prophet Samuel, Julina Lambson Smith greatly desired a son. Having given birth to three lovely daughters, she longed and prayed for a son. She promised the Lord that if He would so bless her she would do everything possible to see that the boy grew up to serve God and be a credit to his father, Joseph F. Smith, then a counselor in the First Presidency. On July 19, 1876, the Lord blessed the Smith home with a son who would receive his father's name. "This was the child destined to follow most closely



Young Joseph Fielding Smith

in the footsteps of his father—missionary, historian, apostle, scriptorian, theologian, counselor in the First Presidency, and finally Prophet of the Lord. The voice of the father was to become the voice of the son; jointly, their years in the apostleship would span in an unbroken chain more than a hundred years" (Joseph F. McConkie, *True and Faithful: The Life Story of Joseph Fielding Smith* [1971], 9, 11).

In his youth, Joseph Fielding Smith drank of the bitter cup of persecution as federal marshals invaded polygamous homes in Utah searching for his father and other Church leaders. He recalled that they prowled around their home interrogating and terrorizing the women and children, blighting their lives, and precipitating a dark cloud of unhappiness and fear. In such gloomy circumstances, his father was forced into near continuous exile between Joseph Fielding's eighth and fifteenth years. Thus, when people later expressed the thought that



The family of Joseph F. Smith, father of Joseph Fielding Smith



Joseph F. Smith and family. Joseph Fielding is in the center of the back row.

President Joseph Fielding Smith had a favored youth and, consequently, he ought to be a great man, he was constrained to admit that they did not understand all of the circumstances. His father was away from home during most of the formative years of Joseph Fielding's youth because of difficulties with the United States government.

One result of those lonely, trying years was the development of an understanding and a courage in young Joseph Fielding that helped him become one of the latter-day Church's most able defenders. Tried, tested, and found true and faithful seems to describe the life of this great servant of the living God.

## In His Youth He Learned to Do What the Lord Wanted Him to Do [10.2]

Joseph Fielding Smith was a boy who thought it his duty to walk through life with his hand in the hand of the Lord. Indeed, his desire to learn the will of the Lord in order that he could live it moved him to read the Book of Mormon twice by the time he was 10 years old. When the ball team missed him, they could generally find him in the hayloft reading that book. He also read and memorized the *Children's Catechism* (an early Church publication that explained the doctrines of the gospel) and Primary books. Natural and spontaneous, his appetite for learning properly whetted throughout his life, he became one of the greatest gospel scholars the Church has known.

**Joseph Fielding Smith** later explained: "From my earliest recollection, from the time I first could read, I have received more pleasure and greater satisfaction out of the study of the scriptures, and reading of the Lord Jesus Christ, and

of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and the work that has been accomplished for the salvation of men, than from anything else in all the world" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1930, 91).

### He Had a Close Brush with Death [10.3]

"Many of Joseph's youthful hours were spent herding cows near the Jordan River [in Utah] and laboring with his brothers on the family farm in Taylorsville. On one occasion when he and his younger brother, George, were loading hay onto a wagon to take it from the field to the barn, Joseph had a close brush with death. They had stopped on a road by the canal to stack some bales and give the team a drink. Because they had a skittish horse, Joseph told George to stand by the head of the team and hold their bridles until he could climb up and take the reins. Instead, George went back and started up the binding rope. As he did so, the horses started with a sudden jerk and Joseph fell down between the horses on the doubletree.

"The thought, 'Well, here's my finish!' flashed through his mind. But something turned the horses and they ran into the canal, while Joseph was thrown clear of their hoofs and the wheels of the wagon. When he got up, he gave George an honest appraisal of his feelings and then hurried home—shaken, but grateful to be in one piece. His father came out to meet him and wanted to know what difficulty he had encountered, having received a strong impression that his son was in some kind of danger" (McConkie, *True and Faithful*, 18).

### He Helped His Mother [10.4]

"When his mother returned from the Hawaiian Islands, Joseph was ten years old, and it was at that tender age that he began assisting her in her professional duties as a licensed midwife or obstetrician. Joseph's job was that of stable boy and buggy driver. At all hours of the day or night, when the call came for his mother's services, Joseph was to hitch up the faithful mare 'Old Meg' to the buggy and drive his mother to the home of the confinement case. Here he might wait while she delivered the baby, or, if his mother thought the wait would be too long, she would send him home with instructions on when to return for her. . . .

"In the daytime and summertime Joseph's assignment was not too unpleasant a one for a ten-year-old youngster. But in the nighttime and wintertime it was very unpleasant. . . . Sometimes they traveled through rain, sleet or snow, or bitter cold wind, in a well ventilated buggy. And then upon reaching the house of the expectant mother, he had what often seemed an endless wait.

"'Sometimes I nearly froze to death. I marveled that so many babies were born in the middle of the night, especially on cold winter nights. I fervently wished that mothers might time things a little better'" (Joseph Fielding Smith Jr. and John J. Stewart, *The Life of Joseph Fielding Smith* [1972], 52–53).

### "I Was Born with a Testimony" [10.5]

**Joseph Fielding Smith** stated: "I was born with a testimony of the gospel. . . . I do not remember a time when I did not have full confidence in the mission of the Prophet

Joseph Smith and in the teachings and guidance of my parents" (quoted in Smith and Stewart, *Life of Joseph Fielding Smith*, 56).

"By nature, Joseph was more quiet and studious than his brothers. It was his habit to hurry with his chores so that he could go to his father's library and study" (McConkie, *True and Faithful*, 18).



A gift from his father

In a letter to a son on a mission, **Joseph Fielding Smith** wrote: "I remember that one thing I did from the time I learned to read and write was to study the gospel. I read and committed to memory the children's catechism and primary books on the gospel. Later I read the History of the Church as recorded in the *Millennial Star*. I also read the Bible, the Book of Mormon, [the] Pearl of Great Price, and the Doctrine and Covenants, and other literature which fell into my hands. . . . I learned at a very early day that God lives; he gave me a testimony when I was a child, and I have tried to be obedient always with some measure of success" (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., 5 vols. [1957–66], 4:vi).

## He Was an Early Riser [10.6]

Inspired by a disciplined father, Joseph Fielding Smith was an early riser, a practice that lasted his entire life and was his formula for getting things done. Even at the age of 95 “he was still his own best sermon on nonretirement. . . . He was up every morning well before 6 o’clock, and put in a heavy day’s work. It was a lifelong habit, and one that he also instilled in his children. ‘People die in bed,’ he cautioned them. ‘And so does ambition.’

“‘Somehow it seemed immoral to lie in bed after 6,’ recalls a son. ‘Of course, I only tried it once. Father saw to that’” (Smith and Stewart, *Life of Joseph Fielding Smith*, 3).



ZCMI storefront. When he was 18 years old, Joseph Fielding Smith worked as a cash boy in the wholesale grocery department in the basement of ZCMI in Salt Lake City.

## He Was a Hard Worker [10.7]

“It was a late summer evening in Salt Lake City, in the year of 1894. Joseph Fielding Smith, 18 years of age, had just completed another day of heavy work as a cash boy in the wholesale grocery department in the basement of the Zion’s Cooperative Mercantile Institution, at Main and South Temple Streets. He flexed his shoulders, took a deep breath, tried to stand up straight. It was not easy. The hours were long, the work was exhausting, and the pay was pitifully meager. ‘I worked like a work horse all day long and was tired out when night came, carrying sacks of flour and sacks of sugar and hams and bacons on my back. I weighed 150 pounds, but I thought nothing of picking up a 200-pound sack and putting it on my shoulders. I was a very foolish fellow, because ever since that time my shoulders have been just a little out of kilter. The right one got a little more “treatment” than the left.’

“But jobs were not easy to find and his family needed all the financial support it could get, from him and his brothers old enough to work. So Joseph felt fortunate to have this job despite the strenuous working conditions

and low pay. The daily physical workout might even be good for him in the long run, if it did not kill him first.

“And now, as was his habit, he stopped by the candy counter and bought a sack of hardtack to take home to Mama and to his younger brothers and sisters. He found pleasure in seeing the little ones’ joy at this frequent treat” (Smith and Stewart, *Life of Joseph Fielding Smith*, 65–66).

## He Was Married before He Served a Mission [10.8]

When Joseph Fielding Smith was 18 his family invited Louie Shurtliff, who was the same age, to live at their home while she attended the University of Utah. Louie’s father and President Joseph F. Smith had been friends since their boyhood days in Nauvoo. Joseph and Louie soon became close friends, sharing a love for learning and a devotion to the gospel. It didn’t take long for them to fall in love. They courted for three and a half years, during which time Louie attended college and **Joseph Fielding** worked for ZCMI. He later recalled, “When she finished and graduated from her school, . . . I did not permit her to go home and stay there, but I persuaded her to change her place of residence, and on the 26th day of April, 1898, we went to the Salt Lake Temple and were married for time and all eternity by my father, President Joseph F. Smith” (quoted in Smith and Stewart, *Life of Joseph Fielding Smith*, 75).



Louie E. Shurtliff (1876–1908), Joseph Fielding’s first wife. They were married April 26, 1898.

A year after their marriage, **Joseph Fielding Smith** left his bride so he could serve a two-year mission in Great Britain. He was accompanied by his brother Joseph Richards, who had been called to serve in the same mission. Leaving for the mission field was not easy for Joseph. He wrote in his journal: “Saturday May 13, 1899: I went up town and purchased some articles to take with me on the way to England. Packed my trunk in the afternoon and got all ready to leave. At six o’clock told all the folks goodbye and left for the depot with feelings that I never felt before, because I was never away from home more than one month in my life, and to think of going away for two years or more causes very peculiar feelings to take possession of me” (quoted in Smith and Stewart, *The Life of Joseph Fielding Smith*, 83).



Missionaries in England, May 28, 1901. Joseph Fielding Smith is second from the left.

Proselyting at that time in Great Britain was very difficult. There was much opposition and few receptive hearts. He worked hard during his service, however, each month handing out over 10,000 tracts and visiting about 4,000 homes. But he did not see the fruits of his labors in the form of baptisms. “During his two-year mission, Elder Smith did not convert and baptize a single person. He did confirm one member, but that was the full extent of his proselyting harvest” (Francis M. Gibbons, *Joseph Fielding Smith: Gospel Scholar, Prophet of God* [1992], 75).

### His Father Expected Excellence [10.9]

“Letters to Elder Joseph Fielding Smith . . . suggest the care with which **President Joseph F. Smith** taught his faithful and obedient son. On February 2, 1900 he wrote: “The best school I ever attended is the school of experience. There are some things that seem difficult for me to learn. One thing is English orthography and I see you



Joseph Fielding Smith and his father, President Joseph F. Smith, May 2, 1914

are a little like me in that regard. Now if I tell you a few words you nearly always spell wrong, the presumption is you will be more careful to spell them right in the future.’

“The father then lists such words as *untill* for *until*, *proscribe* for *prescribe*, *greece* for *grease*, *shure* for *sure*, *shugar* for *sugar*, and so on. . . .

“On March 8, 1900 the father advised:

“‘I scarcely need say to you to make short earnest prayers, short and sincere sermons, and write short letters, concise and to the point, and as often as you can. The difficulty with most people is they are too profuse, both in speaking and writing. We need concentration of mind and thought, and to boil things down. I am please[d] to note the improvement you are making.’ . . .

“Some advice in Joseph F.’s letter of February 20, 1901 contains advice good for all of us:

“‘Always take time to eat your meals and post your journal. I have had experience in these matters. A diary is almost worthless unless written daily. We cannot journalize correctly from memory. Keep your diary up’” (Leonard J. Arrington, “Joseph Fielding Smith: The Training of a Prophet,” Historical Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1972, 7–8; italics added).

### He Learned Much from His Father [10.10]

“Joseph F. Smith was a master teacher who spent many hours responding to the questions of his son and seeing that he was properly founded in principles of truth. ‘Among my fondest memories,’ Joseph Fielding was later to say, ‘are the hours I have spent by his side discussing principles of the gospel and receiving instruction as only he could give it. In this way, the foundation for my own

knowledge was laid in truth so that I, too, can say I know that my Redeemer lives, and that Joseph Smith is, was, and always will be, a prophet of the living God.’

“And what more fitting place to raise a prophet than the home of a prophet? His mother, Julina Lambson Smith, had been raised in the home of George A. Smith, a cousin and close associate of the Prophet Joseph Smith” (McConkie, *True and Faithful*, 12).



A missionary in England; Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, February 21, 1900



Joseph Fielding Smith began working in the Church Historian's Office on October 1, 1901.

### He Was a Defender of the Faith [10.11]

Following his mission, Joseph Fielding Smith was hired to work in the Church Historian's Office. This job led to his appointment in 1906 as an Assistant Church Historian. In this capacity he assisted President Anthon H. Lund, a counselor in the First Presidency and Church Historian, in the various activities of that office. One of his jobs was to gather information for the defense of Reed Smoot, a Utah Senator and Apostle whose right to a Senate seat was being challenged in Washington, D.C.

When Elder Smoot was exonerated, his defeated opponent became extremely bitter; and through a local newspaper he vented his wrath in the form of verbal abuses and slander that he heaped upon the Church and in particular upon the Church President, Joseph F. Smith. So well did young Joseph Fielding present the truth that the issues raised were virtually never in serious contention again.

### He Was a Latter-day Scholar [10.12]

In the preface to a compilation of Joseph Fielding Smith's sermons and writings, his son-in-law **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** wrote: "Joseph Fielding Smith is the leading gospel scholar and the greatest doctrinal teacher of this generation. Few men in this dispensation have approached him in gospel knowledge or surpassed him in spiritual insight. His is the faith and the knowledge of his father, President Joseph F. Smith, and his grandfather, the Patriarch Hyrum Smith" (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 1:v).

### He Found a New Wife and Mother for His Children [10.13]

Joseph Fielding Smith's beloved wife, Louie, became gravely ill during her third pregnancy. She suffered for two months before dying on March 30, 1908. "She and Joseph had been married only ten years, during two of which they were separated while Joseph served his mission. Louie was the mother of two daughters, Josephine, then five years of age, and Julina, two. She was a woman of 'singular sweetness and strength of character,' and the burden of her passing was great.

"The bereaved father closed down the home that he had built for his bride and moved his little family into the Beehive House where his mother and his sisters Julina and Emily could provide motherly love and care for his two little girls. The passing of their mother was particularly hard on two-year-old Julina, whose frequent sobbings for her mother would melt her father's heart" (McConkie, *True and Faithful*, 32).



Joseph Fielding Smith married Ethel Georgina Reynolds November 2, 1908.

The months following Louie's death were difficult and lonely. The young girls continued to sorrow and cry for their mother. Their father spent hours each night comforting and consoling them. Grandmothers and aunts did all they could to assist Joseph Fielding in caring for the children, but they needed a mother. After urging and counsel from both his father and father-in-law, Joseph Fielding began to prayerfully search for a wife who could also be a loving mother to his daughters. He found her in Ethel Georgina Reynolds,

daughter of George Reynolds, a long-time member of the First Council of Seventy, and Amelia Jane Reynolds. They were married on November 2, 1908, in the Salt Lake Temple by President Joseph F. Smith.

### He Was Called as an Apostle [10.14]

"For an hour or more the Church Presidency and Council of Twelve Apostles, meeting in the Salt Lake Temple in April, 1910, had discussed various men as possibilities to fill the vacancy in the council occasioned by the death of

President John R. Winder on March 27, and the subsequent advancement of Apostle John Henry Smith to the presidency. But to every name suggested there was some exception taken. It seemed impossible to reach any unanimity of feeling in the matter. Finally President Joseph F. Smith retired to a room by himself and knelt in prayer for guidance. When he returned he somewhat hesitantly asked the 13 other brethren whether they would be willing to consider his son Joseph Fielding Smith Jr. for the position. He was reluctant to suggest it, he said, because his son Hyrum was already a member of the council and his son David was a counselor in



A newly called Apostle at age 33, April 26, 1910

the Presiding Bishopric. Church members, he feared, would be disgruntled to have another of his sons appointed as a general authority. Nevertheless he felt inspired to offer Joseph's name for their consideration. The other men seemed immediately receptive to the suggestion and sustained President Smith in it" (Smith and Stewart, *Life of Joseph Fielding Smith*, 174).

## Others Knew That He Would Be Called as an Apostle [10.15]

"From **Apostle-Senator Reed Smoot** in Washington, D.C. came the telegram, 'God bless you in your apostleship. Be true and loyal to your leader.' And **Joseph [Fielding Smith]** notes, 'This I shall try always to do. I have also received a number of letters, telegrams, etc., from friends who rejoice at my great blessing, which feeling I believe to be quite universal although there are those who are not pleased. Elder Ben E. Rich, President of the Eastern States Mission . . . who has always been a friend to me, and one year ago predicted that I should be called to this great responsibility, was one of the first to give me the hand of fellowship and his blessing, faith and constant prayers. May the Lord bless him. . . .

"President Francis M. Lyman instructed me in the duties of my calling and told me that I had been called by revelation from the Lord. He said he had watched me for a number of years and while on the trip to Vermont [at the time of the dedication of the Joseph Smith Memorial Monument in December, 1905], both going and coming and while there, he had watched me and felt at that time



Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, July 19, 1914, at age 38

in his heart that I should some day be an apostle, which prediction has been made by several others, all of which predictions I received lightly and without thought of their fulfillment.'

"Three years later, in a second patriarchal blessing, this one from Patriarch Joseph D. Smith at Scipio, Millard County, Joseph Fielding was told, ' . . . you were called and ordained before you came

in the flesh, as an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ to represent his work in the earth'" (Smith and Stewart, *Life of Joseph Fielding Smith*, 178–79, 181).

"Years later Heber J. Grant, who by then was president of the Church and who was present in the council meeting in the temple the day Joseph was chosen in 1910, assured a group of the correctness of the decision: It was at a Smith family reunion. President Grant pointed to Joseph Fielding and said, 'That man was called by direct revelation of God. I am a witness to that fact'" (Smith and Stewart, *Life of Joseph Fielding Smith*, 177).

His ordination to the apostleship was one that he took seriously as a dedicated servant of the Lord. "Ordained to the special calling of preaching repentance to the people, he accepted the responsibility and remained true to this commission all the days of his life. Because of his



At the dedication of the Joseph Smith monument, December 23, 1905. Joseph Fielding Smith is on the far right of the back row. Also in the picture is President Joseph F. Smith (second row, third from the right) and Elder George Albert Smith (middle of front row).



Joseph Fielding Smith with his sons

uncompromising defense of the Lord's laws and principles, he was considered by many to be austere. [He] never compromised with sin, but was quick to forgive and extend a hand of fellowship to a repentant sinner. In truth, no man had greater concern and love for each church member" (Smith and Stewart, *Life of Joseph Fielding Smith*, vi).

### His Wife Described Him [10.16]

In 1932, Ethel Georgina Reynolds Smith gave the following description of her husband, Joseph Fielding Smith:

"You ask me to tell you of the man I know. I have often thought when he is gone people will say, 'He is a very good man, sincere, orthodox, etc.' They will speak of him as the public knows him; but the man they have in mind is very different from the man I know. The man I know is a kind, loving husband and father whose greatest ambition in life is to make his family happy, entirely forgetful of self in his efforts to do this. He is the man that lulls to sleep the fretful child, who tells bedtime stories to the little ones, who is never too tired or too busy to sit up late at night or to get up early in the morning to help the older children solve perplexing school problems. When illness comes the man I know watches tenderly over the afflicted one and waits upon him. It is their father for whom they cry, feeling his presence a panacea for all ills. It is his hands that bind up the wounds, his arms that give courage to the sufferer, his voice that remonstrates with them gently when they err, until it becomes their happiness to do the thing that will make him happy.

"The man I know is most gentle, and if he feels that he has been unjust to anyone the distance is never too far for him to go and, with loving words or kind deeds, erase the hurt. He welcomes gladly the young people to his home and is never happier than when discussing with

them topics of the day—sports or whatever interests them most. He enjoys a good story and is quick to see the humor of a situation, to laugh and to be laughed at, always willing to join in any wholesome activity.

"The man I know is unselfish, uncomplaining, considerate, thoughtful, sympathetic, doing everything within his power to make life a supreme joy for his loved ones. That is the man I know" (quoted in Bryant S. Hinckley, "Joseph Fielding Smith," *Improvement Era*, June 1932, 459).

Ethel was Joseph Fielding's companion for over 28 years. Then, on August 26, 1937, she died. Death separated him from yet another wife. She had borne nine children and mothered eleven. She had also served for 15 years as a member of the Relief Society General Board.

### Jessie Evans Helped Add Much to His Zest for Living [10.17]

"Before Ethel died she requested that Jessie Evans [a famed contralto soloist with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir] be asked to sing at her funeral service. 'If I should ever die before you,' she told her husband one day, 'I want you to have Jessie Evans sing at my funeral.' At her death Joseph Fielding sent his brother-in-law William C. Patrick to Miss Evans to make the request. . . . She had kindly complied and sang at the service. Afterward Joseph Fielding sent her a note of appreciation" (Smith and Stewart, *Life of Joseph Fielding Smith*, 252).



Joseph Fielding Smith married Jessie Evans on April 12, 1938.

Jessie Evans responded to the note and a friendship developed between them. Soon the friendship grew into courtship and on April 12, 1938, at the age of 61, Elder Joseph Fielding Smith married Jessie Ella Evans in the Salt Lake Temple.

"When the Tabernacle Choir scheduled a tour to California in 1941, with Richard L. Evans as commentator, Joseph Fielding composed a

hilarious letter to Evans charging him with the care and protection of Jessie on the trip: 'You are hereby authorized, appointed, chosen, designated, named, commanded, assigned, ordained and otherwise notified, informed, advised and instructed, *two wit*: . . .' the letter began, and several paragraphs of nonsense later, "To see that the said Mrs. Jessie Evans Smith, is permitted



President and Sister Smith at the Days of '47 parade, 1971

to travel in safety, comfort, ease, without molestation and that she is to be returned again to her happy home and loving husband and family in the beautiful and peaceful State of Utah and to her anxious and numerous kindred. . . .

"Richard L. replied in part, 'Your masterful document of August 15 has cost me a good deal of brow-wrinkling and excruciating concentration. I think without question it will go down in history with the Bill of Rights and the Magna Charta. The remarkable thing about it is, as my legal staff and I have studied it over, that it conveys to me no privileges that I did not already feel free to take and imposes on me no responsibilities that it was not already my pleasure and intention to assume. However, it is a good idea, as many men can testify, to have the consent of a husband before traveling two thousand miles with his wife.' . . .

"Both Joseph Fielding and Jessie enjoyed a colorful cast iron plaque that hung on the kitchen wall of their apartment, stating, 'Opinions expressed by the husband in this household are not necessarily those of the management.' One time when she was assisting him in his office, when his secretary was on vacation, he tapped her on the shoulder as she sat at the typewriter, and said, 'Remember, Mama dear, *over here you are not* the Speaker of the House!'" (Smith and Stewart, *Life of Joseph Fielding Smith*, 260–61).

### He Enjoyed Wholesome Humor [10.18]

The members of the Church everywhere were well acquainted with this respected theologian, and they welcomed his clear, unmistakable commentary on the scriptures. But there was almost universal ignorance

of Joseph Fielding's remarkably humorous nature. His innate humor was unaffected and inoffensive. It sprang naturally from real life experiences. One experience **Joseph Fielding Smith** liked to relate about his younger days was about a mare named Junie. He said:

"Junie was one of the most intelligent animals I ever saw. She seemed almost human in her ability. I could not keep her locked in the barn because she would continually undo the strap on the door of her stall. I used to put the strap connected to the half-door of the stall over the top of the post, but she would simply lift it off with her nose and teeth. Then she would go out in the yard.

"There was a water tap in the yard used for filling the water trough for our animals. Junie would turn this on with her teeth and then leave the water running. My father would get after me because I couldn't keep that horse in the barn. She never ran away; she just turned on the water and then walked around the yard or over the lawn or through the garden. In the middle of the night, I would hear the water running and then I would have to get up and shut it off and lock Junie up again.

"My father suggested that the horse seemed smarter than I was. One day he decided that he would lock her in so that she could not get out. He took the strap that usually looped over the top of the post and buckled it around the post and under a crossbar, and then he said, 'Young lady, let's see you get out of there now!' My father and I left the barn and started to walk back to the house; and before we reached it, Junie was at our side, somewhat to my delight. I could not refrain from suggesting to Father that I was not the only one whose head compared unfavorably with the mare's" (quoted in Smith and Stewart, *Life of Joseph Fielding Smith*, 53–54).

### He Enjoyed an Active Lifestyle [10.19]

Advancing years brought concern to Joseph Fielding Smith's family as they saw no slackening in the pace of their beloved brother and father. One biographer wrote: "Even in advanced age Joseph Fielding Smith was one of the hardest working men I knew. 'How do you manage to get so much done?' I once asked him. 'It's in the bag,' he said. 'In the bag?' I asked. He pointed to a lunch sack. 'I'm a brown bagger.' For



Enjoying some baseball



President Smith enjoyed playing handball with his brother David.

years he carried a sack lunch to his office, so he could keep working through the noon hour. 'That gives me an extra 300 hours per year.' One day a sister of his called on him at the office and scolded him for not taking a nap after lunch. She cited by name half a dozen of his associates who had long done so. 'Yes,' he replied, 'and where are they today? All dead!' " (Smith and Stewart, *Life of Joseph Fielding Smith*, 3–4).

## He Was Actively Involved in Sports Past His 65th Year [10.20]

Although he was an excellent swimmer, good at tennis and basketball, and enjoyed watching his sons play football, Joseph Fielding Smith's favorite sport was handball. His son Reynolds reported that he and his brother Lewis played handball against their father, who held one hand behind his back while he "trounced" both of them.

Herbert B. Maw, a former governor of Utah who was 20 years younger than Joseph Fielding, shared an experience about a handball game with him: "I thought I would just take it easy on the old gentleman and not beat him too far. Imagine my chagrin when he gave me the trouncing of my life! I thought that I was a good handball player, but I was no competition for him at all" (quoted in Smith and Stewart, *Life of Joseph Fielding Smith*, 15).

## He Enjoyed Flying [10.21]

One biographer wrote of his experience finding out about Joseph Fielding Smith's hobby of flying in jet planes "at an age when many men are tucked safely away in a nursing home absorbing liniment":

"I remember my surprise one day when I called at his office in Salt Lake City. His secretary, Rubie Egbert, said,

'Step to the window here and maybe you can see him.' Curious, I walked to the window. But all that I could see was a jet streaking through the blue sky high above the Great Salt Lake. Its trail of white vapor clearly marked some steep climbs, loops, dives, rolls and turns. . . .

"'You mean he's in that plane?' I asked incredulously.

"'Oh yes, that's him all right. He's very fond of flying. Says it relaxes him. A friend in the National Guard calls him up and says, 'How about a relaxing?' and up they go. Once they get in the air he often takes over the controls. Flew down to Grand Canyon and back last week, 400 miles an hour!"

"I could not resist driving to the airport to be there when he landed. As the two-place T-Bird roared down the runway to a stop, from the rear cockpit, in suit and helmet, climbed this benign old gentleman, then about 80, smiling broadly. 'That was wonderful!' he exclaimed. 'That's about as close to heaven as I can get just now.'

"At age 92 he was advanced in the National Guard to the honorary rank of brigadier-general. 'But they still didn't want me to fly alone.' Later he limited his flying to commercial jetliners. . . . 'The big planes are not so exciting as the T-Bird, but at my age it's a real comfort to be able to move faster than sound,' he said at 95" (Smith and Stewart, *Life of Joseph Fielding Smith*, 1–2).



He loved to fly. President Smith sitting in a National Guard jet, 1954

## Children Adored Him [10.22]

Sensitive and understanding, Joseph Fielding Smith despised misery and suffering everywhere and did all in his power to alleviate it by clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, and visiting those in need. A pillar of strength and encouragement to his family and the Church, he was loved universally. He loved little children and they adored him.

"After general conference in April 1970, when President Smith was sustained, a large crowd gathered at the door of the Tabernacle to get a glimpse of him.

"A small girl wriggled out of the crowd and made her way to the President. Soon she was in his arms for a big hug. Quickly a newspaper photographer snapped a picture, and the little girl disappeared back into the crowd.

"The picture appeared unidentified in the Church News. The picture was soon after identified by the child's grandmother, Mrs. Milo Hobbs of Preston, Idaho, [in] a letter to President Smith.

"On her birthday, [four-year-old] Venus Hobbs of Torrence, California, received a surprise telephone call from President and Sister Smith, who were visiting that week in California. They sang 'Happy Birthday' over the phone to her. Venus was delighted at the song, and her parents were touched with tears to think the President of the church would call.

"The parents explained that Venus had been with two aunts at conference, but had slipped away. They feared that she was lost in the crowd. When she returned they asked, 'How did you get lost?'

"'I wasn't lost,' she said.

"'Who found you?' they asked.

"'I was in the arms of the Prophet,' she replied" ("Joy of Life, Activity and People," *Church News*, July 8, 1972, 7).

Children everywhere recognized the great warmth and love that emanated from President Joseph Fielding Smith. They felt free to express their love for him openly and honestly. Everywhere he went he had time for children. They enjoyed his heartfelt hugs and basked in the security of his love.



The prophet loved children. President Smith with his great-granddaughter Shauna McConkie at Christmas time

a younger man. They wondered how President Smith could endure the pressures of administering the affairs of the emerging world Church. However, the vigorous profile of President Smith's administration left no lingering question in the minds of the Saints with respect to that concern. Two "youthful" counselors were invited to match strides with this prophet—Harold B. Lee, age 72, and N. Eldon Tanner, age 73.

## We Must Prepare for the Lord's Coming

[10.24]

**President Joseph Fielding Smith** taught about the importance of being prepared for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ:

"I was asked, not long ago, if I could tell when the Lord would come. I answered, Yes; and I answer, Yes, now. I know when he will come. He will come tomorrow. We have his word for it. Let me read it:

"Behold, now it is called today until the coming of the Son of Man, and verily it is a day of sacrifice, and a day for the tithing of my people; for he that is tithed shall not be burned at his coming.' (Now there is a discourse sufficient on tithing.) 'For after today cometh the burning—this is speaking after the manner of the Lord—for verily I say, tomorrow all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble; and I will burn them up, for I am the Lord of Hosts; and I will not spare any that remain in Babylon.' [D&C 64:23–24.]

"So the Lord is coming, I say, tomorrow. Then let us be prepared. Elder Orson F. Whitney used to write about the Saturday Evening of Time. We are living in the Saturday Evening of Time. This is the 6th day now drawing to its close. When the Lord says it is today until his coming, that, I think, is what he has in mind, for he shall come in the morning of the Sabbath, or seventh day of the earth's temporal existence, to inaugurate the millennial reign and to take his rightful place as King of kings and Lord of lords, to rule and reign upon the earth, as it is his right. [See D&C 77:12.]" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:1).



A latter-day scholar

## A New President Was Sustained [10.23]



The First Presidency: Harold B. Lee, Joseph Fielding Smith, and N. Eldon Tanner, about 1970

During the April 1970 general conference, over 2.5 million members of the Church reverently sustained a newly called President of the Church for the first time in nearly 19 years. At the age of 93, President Joseph Fielding Smith was the oldest man to become the President of the Church.

Some had supposed that the Lord would choose

"I know that there are many, and even some among the Latter-day Saints, who are saying just as the Lord said they would say, 'The Lord delayeth his coming.' [D&C 45:26; 2 Peter 3:3–14.] One man said: 'It is impossible for Jesus Christ to come inside of three or four hundred years.' But I say unto you, Watch.

"I do not know when he is going to come. No man knows. Even the angels of heaven are in the dark in regard to that great truth. [See Matthew 24:36–37.] But this I know, that the signs that have been pointed out are here. The earth is full of calamity, of trouble. The hearts of men are failing them. We see the signs as we see the fig tree putting forth her leaves; and knowing this time is near, it behooves me and it behooves you, and all men upon the face of the earth, to pay heed to the words of Christ, to his apostles and watch, for we know not the day nor the hour. But I tell you this, it shall come as a thief in the night, when many of us will not be ready for it" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:52–53).

## Christ Will Come in a Day of Great Wickedness [10.25]

**President Joseph Fielding Smith** taught that the Lord's Second Coming would not be delayed; He will come at the appointed time:

"When we become ripe in iniquity, then the Lord will come. I get annoyed sometimes at some of our elders who when speaking say the Lord will come when we all become righteous enough to receive him. The Lord is not going to wait for us to get righteous. When he gets ready to come, he is going to come—when the cup of iniquity is full—and if we are not righteous then, it will be just too bad for us, for we will be classed among the ungodly, and we will be as stubble to be swept off the face of the earth, for the Lord says wickedness shall not stand.

"Do not think the Lord delays his coming, for he will come at the appointed time, not the time which I have heard some preach when the earth becomes righteous enough to receive him. I have heard some men in positions and places of trust in the Church preach this, men who are supposed to be acquainted with the word of the Lord, but they failed to comprehend the scriptures. Christ will come in the day of wickedness, when the earth is ripe in iniquity and prepared for the cleansing, and as the cleanser and purifier he will come, and all the wicked will be as stubble and will be consumed" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:3).



Joseph Fielding Smith with his son-in-law Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

## We Must Raise the Voice of Warning [10.26]

**President Smith** taught: "There is no peace. Men's hearts are failing them. Greed has the uppermost place in the hearts of men. Evil is made manifest on every side, and people are combining for their own selfish interests. Because of this I was glad to hear the warning voice raised by our beloved President [Heber J. Grant] and by his counselors, . . . and by others of the brethren who have spoken; for I think this should be a time of warning, not only to the Latter-day Saints, but to all the world. We owe it to the world to raise a voice of warning, and especially to the members of the Church" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:49).

## The Worldly Ignore the Warnings [10.27]

**President Joseph Fielding Smith** taught how world conditions might be made better if people would listen to the warnings of the Lord:

"The Lord intends that men shall be happy; that is his purpose. But men refuse to be happy and make themselves miserable, because they think their ways are better than God's ways, and because of selfishness, greed, and the wickedness that is in their hearts; and that is the trouble with us today. The leaders of our nation are struggling and trying to do something to better conditions. I can tell you in a few words just how it can be done, and it is not going to be done by legislation—it is not going to be done by pouring money out upon the people.

“Temporary relief is not going to better the situation, because we will still be struggling and fighting and contending with crime, with disease, with plagues, and with pestilence, with the whirlwinds, and with the dust storms, and with the earthquakes and everything else coming upon the face of the earth, according to the predictions of the prophets—all because men will not heed the warning voice.

“When we quit loving money and get the love of gold out of our hearts and the greed and selfishness, and learn to love the Lord, our God, with all our hearts, and our neighbor as ourselves, and get on our knees and learn to pray and repent of our sins, we will have prosperity, we will have peace, we will have contentment. But the people will not repent no matter what warning is made, no matter how much their attention is called to these things; the people will not repent because their hearts are set upon evil, and destruction awaits them” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:35–36).

## The Saints Can Escape Only through Obedience [10.28]

**President Joseph Fielding Smith** taught that obedience can protect us from the plagues of the last days:

“In this day of prosperity, let us be humble and remember the Lord and keep his commandments and feel that the dangers before us are far greater than they are in the days of trial and tribulation. Do not think for a moment that the days of trial are over. They are not. If we keep the commandments of the Lord, we shall prosper, we shall be blessed; the plagues, the calamities that have been promised will be poured out upon the peoples of the earth, and we shall escape them, yea, they shall pass us by.

“But remember the Lord says if we fail to keep his word, if we walk in the ways of the world, they will not pass us by, but we shall be visited with floods and with fire, with sword and with plague and destruction. We may escape these things through faithfulness” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:34).



Joseph Fielding Smith

## Everyone Should Live the Gospel [10.29]

**President Joseph Fielding Smith** encouraged everyone to live the gospel:

“To the honest in heart in all nations we say: The Lord loves you. He wants you to receive the full blessings of the gospel. He is now inviting you to believe the Book of Mormon, to accept Joseph Smith as a prophet, and to come into his earthly kingdom and thereby become heirs of eternal life in his heavenly kingdom.



A hug from the prophet

“To those who have received the gospel we say: Keep the commandments. Walk in the light. Endure to the end. Be true to every covenant and obligation, and the Lord will bless you beyond your fondest dreams. As it was said by one of old: ‘Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.’ (Eccles. 12:13.)

“To all the families in Israel we say: The family is the most important organization in time or in eternity. Our purpose in life is to create for ourselves eternal family units. There is nothing that will ever come into your family life that is as important as the sealing blessings of the temple and then keeping the covenants made in connection with this order of celestial marriage.

“To parents in the Church we say: Love each other with all your hearts. Keep the moral law and live the gospel. Bring up your children in light and truth; teach them the saving truths of the gospel; and make your home a heaven on earth, a place where the Spirit of the Lord may dwell and where righteousness may be enthroned in the heart of each member.

“It is the will of the Lord to strengthen and preserve the family unit. We plead with fathers to take their rightful place as the head of the house. We ask mothers to sustain and support their husbands and to be lights to their children.

“**President Joseph F. Smith** said: ‘Motherhood lies at the foundation of happiness in the home, and of prosperity in the nation. God has laid upon men and women very sacred obligations with respect to motherhood, and they are obligations that cannot be disregarded without invoking divine displeasure.’ (*Gospel Doctrine* [Deseret Book, 1939], p. 288.). Also, ‘To be a successful father or a successful mother is greater than to be a successful general or a successful statesman.’ (Ibid., p. 285.)



President Joseph Fielding Smith and his counselor President N. Eldon Tanner at the cornerstone laying ceremony of the Ogden Utah Temple, September 1970

"To the youth of Zion we say: The Lord bless you and keep you, which most assuredly will be so as you learn his laws and live in harmony with them. Be true to every trust. Honor thy father and thy mother. Dwell together in love and conformity. Be modest in your dress. Overcome the world, and do not be led astray by the fashions and practices of those whose interests are centered upon the things of this world.

"Marry in the temple, and live joyous and righteous lives. Remember the words of Alma: 'Wickedness never was happiness.' (Al. 41:10.) Remember also that our hope for the future and the destiny of the Church and the cause of righteousness rest in your hands.

"To those who are called to positions of trust and responsibility in the Church we say: Preach the gospel in plainness and simplicity as it is found in the standard works of the Church. Testify of the truth of the work and the doctrines revealed anew in our day.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, who said, 'I am among you as he that serveth' (Luke 22:27), and choose to serve with an eye single to the glory of God. Visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and keep yourself unspotted from the sins of the world" ("Counsel to the Saints and to the World," *Ensign*, July 1972, 27–28).

## A New Era of Area Conferences Began

[10.30]

On August 27–29, 1971, in Manchester, England, President Joseph Fielding Smith met with the members at an area conference held for the first time in the Church. There was great excitement among the members of the Church and

they came from many areas of Europe to hear the prophet of God. For many Latter-day Saints there, it was the first time they had been in the presence of the Lord's representative. **President Joseph Fielding Smith** told them:

"It is a matter of great satisfaction to me and my Brethren that the Church has now grown to the point that it seems wise and necessary to hold general conferences in various nations. . . .

"We are members of a world church, a church that has the plan of life and salvation, a church set up by the Lord himself in these last days to carry his message of salvation to all his children in all the earth.

"The day is long since past when informed people think of us as a strange group in the tops of the Rocky Mountains in America. It is true that the Church headquarters are in Salt Lake City, and that the Lord's house has been erected there to which people have come from many nations to learn the law of the Lord and to walk in his paths.

"But now we are coming of age as a church and as a people. We have attained the stature and strength that are enabling us to fulfill the commission given us by the Lord through the Prophet Joseph Smith that we should carry the glad tidings of the restoration to every nation and to all people.

"And not only shall we preach the gospel in every nation before the second coming of the Son of Man, but we shall make converts and establish congregations of saints among them. . . .

"And so I say, we are and shall be a world church. That is our destiny. It is part of the Lord's program. 'The covenant people of the Lord' are 'scattered upon all the face of the earth,' and it is our commission to go into all nations and gather these elect into the Church, and to bring them to a knowledge of their Redeemer, so they shall be heirs of salvation in his kingdom" ("To the Saints in Great Britain," *Ensign*, Sept. 1971, 2–3).

"Tearful eyes watched, and voices were muted as President Joseph Fielding Smith stood at the conclusion of the first All-British General Conference. As he stood, the audience came to their feet. No one moved as the Prophet left the stand. It was as though they did not want to leave the spirit that had prevailed in the



President Smith speaking at Kings Hall, Manchester, England, August 1971

meeting. There was a sacred air about King's Hall and as a testimony to the spirit the audience burst into spontaneous singing of 'We Thank Thee O God for a Prophet.'

"The song ended, but the crowd lingered, hungry for the sweetness of the occasion" (J. M. Heslop, "Prophet Leads Conference; British Saints Rejoice," *Church News*, Sept. 4, 1971, 3).

## He Called for Greater Emphasis on Family Home Evening [10.31]

Nothing sounded deeper in the heart of President Joseph Fielding Smith than the importance and sanctity of the home. His messages are replete with counsel to parents and children. One of the first concerns he dealt with as President of the Church was to bolster the home by strengthening an already revealed institution—family home evening.

**President Smith** announced that Monday evenings should be held inviolate as the time to gather the family and teach the gospel, and he lovingly entreated parents to take their task seriously:

"We have great concern for the spiritual and moral welfare of all youth everywhere. Morality, chastity, virtue, freedom from sin—these are and must be basic to our way of life, if we are to realize its full purpose.

"We plead with fathers and mothers to teach personal purity by precept and example and to counsel with their children in all such things.

"We ask parents to set an example of righteousness in their own lives and to gather their children around them and teach them the gospel, in their home evenings and at other times" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1970, 5–6).

## He Was True and Steady to the End [10.32]

The 95 years of President Joseph Fielding Smith's life spanned travel by horse and buggy to the jet age. He was 27 years old when the Wright brothers (inventors of the first powered airplane) made their maiden voyage at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. He viewed the invention of the airplane as fulfillment of prophecy. He loved to fly and thrived on the excitement of supersonic speed. But in a practical sense, his life was a model of simplicity. His interest was in service and not in money or popularity. He willingly gave money to those in need but was visibly embarrassed when receiving public recognition. He chose to live in a simple apartment rather than in luxurious surroundings. He preferred walking to riding, and having his wife driving their compact car rather than traveling in a chauffeured luxury limousine that was offered him.

As President Smith aged, he continued to work hard and keep his sense of humor. "When at 89 years of age he was walking down a flight of steps from his apartment, he slipped, fell, and suffered multiple fractures of his leg. But he was due at a meeting in the Temple a block away. Gritting his teeth, he walked the block, 'limping like an old man,' attended the meeting, walked home again, and only then, at others' insistence, accepted medical treatment. 'The meeting got a little long,' he admitted. 'But then, most meetings do'" (Smith and Stewart, *Life of Joseph Fielding Smith*, 4).

President Smith passed away in Salt Lake City on July 2, 1972. In a letter to President Smith's children, **President Harold B. Lee** wrote: "His passing to me was as near a translation from life unto death as I think we will see in our lifetime experience. He died as he lived and has demonstrated to all of us how one can be so honored and so privileged when he has lived so close to the Lord as has your noble patriarch and father, Joseph Fielding Smith" (quoted in Smith and Stewart, *Life of Joseph Fielding Smith*, 384).



President Joseph Fielding Smith



# Harold B. Lee

Eleventh President of the Church

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## Highlights in the Life of Harold B. Lee

Age	Events
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	He was born March 28, 1899, in Clifton, Idaho, to Samuel Marion and Louisa Emily Bingham Lee.
13–17	He attended Oneida Stake Academy (1912–16).
17–21	He taught school for four years (1916–20).
21–23	He served a mission to the western United States (1920–22).
24–29	He was a principal in the Granite School District, Salt Lake City, Utah (1923–28).
24	He married Fern L. Tanner (Nov. 14, 1923; she died Sept. 24, 1962).
31	He became president of the Pioneer Stake (Oct. 26, 1930); he helped develop self-help projects in his stake.
33	He was appointed a member of the Salt Lake City Commission (Dec. 1932).
36	He was called to organize the Church Security Welfare Program (1935).
37	He became managing director of the Church Security Welfare Program (Apr. 15, 1936).
42	He was ordained an Apostle (Apr. 10, 1941).
55	He toured the Orient (fall, 1954).
60	He toured the missions of Central and South America (1959).
62	He became chairman of the Church Correlation Program (Oct. 4, 1961).
64	He married Freda Joan Jensen (June 17, 1963).
70	He became President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and a counselor to President Joseph Fielding Smith (Jan. 23, 1970).
73	He became President of the Church (July 7, 1972); he organized the Jerusalem Branch (Sept. 20, 1972); he presided at the second area conference of the Church, in Mexico City (Aug. 26–28, 1972).
74	He died in Salt Lake City, Utah (Dec. 26, 1973).

## The Safety of the Church Lies in Obedience [11.1]

Reporters waited anxiously on July 7, 1972, for their first press conference with **Harold B. Lee**, newly ordained President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. To them he said, “The safety of the church lies in the members keeping the commandments. There is nothing more important that I could say. As they keep the commandments, blessings will come” (quoted in Stephen W. Gibson, “Presidency Meets the Press,” *Church News*, July 15, 1972, 3).

## He Had a Noble Heritage [11.2]

Harold B. Lee’s great-great-great-grandfather William Lee fought and was wounded while fighting against the British in the Revolutionary War. His great-grandfather Francis Lee joined the Church in 1832 and passed through the travails of sufferings that the early Saints endured. His grandmother Margaret Lee experienced 11 pregnancies, but had no children survive until her 12th, Samuel Lee. She died eight days after his birth.

## He Was Born of Goodly Parents [11.3]

Harold Bingham Lee was born in Clifton, Idaho, on March 28, 1899, to Samuel and Louisa Bingham Lee. Harold was the second of six children. Samuel Lee, Harold’s father, was a quiet, compassionate, unassuming, thoughtful

man. He was a devoted husband and father and a faithful servant of the Lord. When Harold was called on a mission to Denver, Colorado, his father gave him a blessing. When he was called as an Apostle, his father again gave him a blessing. His mother, Louisa, was a strength in and out of the Lee home. She was sensitive to the Spirit and taught her son to follow the promptings of the Spirit.



Louisa Emily Bingham Lee

## He Grew Up in Clifton, Idaho [11.4]

As Harold B. Lee grew up, he experienced the challenges of rural living. During his youth there were few tractors and little power machinery to cultivate, seed, or harvest crops. This rural setting provided training and blessings

that were to be of great importance to his future callings in the Lord’s kingdom.

Later in his life, **Harold B. Lee** explained what it was like: “I have thought of the discipline of the boy and girl of my youthful days in a rural community. We began to ‘do chores’ shortly after daybreak so we could ‘start’ with the day’s work by sun-up. When the day’s work was finished, we had yet to do our evening ‘chores,’ usually by aid of a lantern.

Despite the fact that there were no wages and hours regulations or child labor laws, we did not seem to be stunted from our exertions. Sleep requirements did not admit of too frequent frivolities. Returns from our labors were small and usually came on a once-a-year basis at harvest time. Homes of that day went throughout the summer with but very little ready money but from our cows we were provided milk, butter and cheese; in our granaries there was usually sufficient wheat to be taken to the mill for flour and cereals. We had our own chickens and garden and fruits in season” (*Decisions for Successful Living* [1973], 12–13).



Five-year-old Harold B. Lee

## “Harold, Don’t Go Over There” [11.5]

**Harold B. Lee** recalled an important incident from his youth: “As a little boy I had my first intimate touch with divinity. As a young boy I was out on a farm waiting for my father to finish his day’s work, playing about and manufacturing things to wile away the time, when



Harold B. Lee heard a divine warning to stay away from some broken-down sheds.

I saw over the fence in the neighbor’s yard some broken-down buildings where the sheds were caving in and had rotting timbers. I imagined that that might be a castle that I should explore, so I went over to the fence and started to climb through; then I heard a voice as distinctly as you are hearing mine: ‘Harold, don’t go over there.’ I looked in every direction

to see where the speaker was. I wondered if it was my father, but he couldn't see me. There was no one in sight. I realized that someone was warning me of an unseen danger—whether a nest of rattlesnakes or whether the rotting timbers would fall on me and crush me, I don't know. But from that time on, I accepted without question the fact that there were processes not known to man by which we can hear voices from the unseen world, by which we can have brought to us the visions of eternity" ("The Way to Eternal Life," *Ensign*, Nov. 1971, 17).

## His Mother Saved Him from Two Near-Fatal Accidents [11.6]

"Louisa's patriarchal blessing had mentioned her gift of healing, and her inspiration had preserved Harold's life on several occasions. At age eight, his mother sent him for a can of lye, high on a pantry shelf, to make soap with. He slipped and the can tipped its deadly contents all over him. Immediately Louisa grabbed Harold so he wouldn't run, kicked off the lid of a large vat of pickled beets, and splashed cup after cup of red vinegar juice all over his head and body, neutralizing the lye. What could have been a tragedy was averted because of her inspired action.



Harold B. Lee as a high school student

"While working in the fields in his teens, Harold gashed an artery on a broken bottle. Louisa stopped the bleeding, but the wound became infected. She took a clean black stocking, burned it to ashes, opened his wound, and rubbed the ashes into it very thoroughly. It healed quickly after this" (Jaynann Morgan Payne, "Louisa Bingham Lee: Sacrifice and Spirit," *Ensign*, Feb. 1974, 82–83).

## Financial Depression Was Looked upon as an Opportunity to Learn and Grow [11.7]

**President Harold B. Lee** explained how the hardships he went through as a youth helped him develop an understanding of others' needs: "Yes, we might have been close to the poverty line in the days of my youth. But out of that period came training and compensations that never could have come, I think, if we had been living in the lap of luxury. We didn't starve. We had food to eat, and Mother knew how to make over the clothes for her

boys. I never had what they called a 'boughten suit' until I went to high school, but I always thought I was well dressed. After I filled a mission, I came back home and went to the University of Utah to get a teaching certification, and oftentimes I walked to and from school. I didn't have the money to ride because I needed the money to buy books" (*Ye Are the Light of the World: Selected Sermons and Writings of President Harold B. Lee* [1974], 344–45).

## His Mother's Care Had a Lasting Impression on Him [11.8]

Soon after his call to be a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, **Elder Harold B. Lee** paid the following tribute to his mother:

"I have been blessed with a splendid father and a grand and lovely mother, one who didn't display often her affection, but showed her love in tangible ways that, as a child, I came early to recognize as true mother love.

"As just a high school boy I went away on a high school debating team. We won the debate. I came back and called mother on the telephone only to have her say: 'Never mind, Son. I know all about it. I will tell you when you come home at the end of the week.' When I came home she took me aside and said: 'When I knew it was just time for this performance to start I went out among the willows by the creek side, and there, all by myself, I remembered you and prayed God you would not fail.' I have come to know that that kind of love is necessary for every son and daughter who seek to achieve in this world" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1941, 120).



Harold B. Lee enjoyed playing basketball (standing second on the right).



Harold B. Lee (front row, second from right) with friends in front of the Oneida Stake Academy, Preston, Idaho, in 1916

## He Was a Gifted and Hardworking Student [11.9]

Harold B. Lee completed the eighth grade at the Clifton, Idaho, grammar school by age 13. His parents were supportive of their son continuing his education and sent him to the Oneida Stake Academy. The academy, founded in 1888 in Franklin, Idaho, had been moved to Preston in 1898. It offered courses in science, mathematics, biology, business, history, and physical education. There were special courses in carpentry, music, and

missionary work. Harold gave special attention to music his first two years. He played the alto and French horns and later took up the baritone horn. As he grew in stature he took a more active role in sports, with basketball being his favorite. During his senior year, his school activities included reporting for the school newspaper and debate. He graduated in the spring of 1916.



Debating champions. Harold B. Lee is on the right.

## He Received His Teaching Certificate [11.10]

**Harold B. Lee** explained what he did to qualify for a teaching certificate:

“In the summer of 1916, at the age of seventeen, I attended the Albion State Normal School at Albion, Idaho, to receive preparatory training to become a teacher. This was a fine school, providing me some of the finest teachers of my lifetime. The laws of Idaho required

a rigid test in fifteen subjects in order to qualify, and I spent a very strenuous summer in intensive study, losing twenty pounds in weight, but [I] gained my objective, passing the required examination with an average grade of 89 percent.

“Albion was a quaint little old-fashioned town twenty or thirty miles from the nearest railroad at Burley, Idaho. Practically nothing was there but the school, which was splendid. There were no amusements except at the school, and the old board sidewalks indicated the general backwardness of the inhabitants. Removed as it was from all attractions that might detract from school, I think I never absorbed so much knowledge as during the summers of 1916 and 1917 when I earned my second- and third-class certificates” (quoted in L. Brent Goates, *Harold B. Lee: Prophet and Seer* [1985], 48).

## He Taught for Four Years before His Mission [11.11]

After his first summer at Albion State Normal School, Harold B. Lee was prepared to begin teaching. His first teaching position was in a one-room schoolhouse in Weston, Idaho, with 25 students in grades one through eight. A coin was flipped to see if his salary would be 60 or 65 dollars a month. Harold lost. He spent many long hours preparing a curriculum that would meet the needs of such a diverse group of students. He was strict, but fair, and earned the respect of his students.

At age 18, **Harold B. Lee** became the principal of a school in Oxford, Idaho. As an addition to the regular curriculum, he established the Oxford Athletic Club and started a women’s choir. He was also called to be the elders quorum president. He later wrote about his time at the school:

“I was principal of this school for three winters and was there during the severe influenza epidemic of 1918, our school being quarantined for some months. We had just reopened the school when every family but two came down with the disease, and it became necessary for neighboring towns to assist in supplying food and nursing until their recovery. . . .

“Because my father had financed me through



Harold B. Lee’s first teaching appointment was at the Silver Star School, in Weston, Idaho, from 1916–18. He was also the principal there.

school, and I was staying at home, I turned over my paychecks from teaching school to him and then paid my extra expenses by playing in a dance orchestra" (quoted in Goates, *Harold B. Lee*, 53).

## He Received a Mission Call [11.12]

In September 1920, at the age of 21, Harold B. Lee received a letter from President Heber J. Grant calling him to the Western States Mission, with headquarters in Denver, Colorado. His mission call meant that the Lee family would need to get by without Harold's income. It also meant that they would have to support their son and brother in the mission field.

After serving for nine months, Elder Lee was called to preside over the Denver Conference. His mission president, John M. Knight, told him, "I am just giving you a chance to show what is in you" (quoted in Goates, *Harold B. Lee*, 62). He earned the respect of his mission president, his fellow missionaries, and the members of the Church.



Elder Harold B. Lee as a missionary in the Western States Mission, 1920–22

One highlight of his mission was being invited by President Knight to tour the mission. On one occasion, President Knight was unable to be present the first two days of meetings with the Saints in Sheridan, Wyoming. The leaders in Sheridan were disappointed with the prospect of spending two days with such a young and inexperienced priesthood leader; however, after being instructed by Elder Lee, when President Knight joined them two

days later they wanted to hear more from the young missionary.

Elder Lee was released from his mission in December 1922. He recorded in his journal: "When the [mission] president announced that I was released, he said that it would bankrupt the English language to tell how much he thought of me and said that I had been on the firing line from the time I had arrived in Denver" (quoted in Goates, *Harold B. Lee*, 72).

## He Married Fern Tanner [11.13]

One of the great blessings of Harold B. Lee's mission was meeting Sister Fern Tanner. Upon his return, he renewed his association with this fellow missionary and she became his wife on November 14, 1923. Soon after his mission he also paid a courtesy call to a former missionary companion's girlfriend, Freda Jensen. Freda never married the missionary. She remained unmarried until the death of Fern Tanner Lee. She then, 40 years after their first meeting, became the wife of Harold B. Lee.



Photo courtesy of L. Brent and Helen Goates

While on his mission, Harold B. Lee became acquainted with Fern Lucinda Tanner, a sister missionary from Utah. After their missions, they renewed their friendship in Salt Lake City and were married in the Salt Lake Temple on November 14, 1923.

## The Lord Prepared Him to Serve the Needy [11.14]

A severe financial depression hit the United States in October 1929. By 1930, when Harold B. Lee was 31, unemployment had risen drastically and credit was not available. More than half of the members of the Pioneer Stake in Salt Lake City, Harold's stake, were out of work. In October he was called as president of the stake. He worried about the welfare of his members. He wept and prayed, and finally inspiration came. Programs were set up to care for those in need.

**President Marion G. Romney**, who was a member of the First Presidency, spoke of those early years:

"Soon after I met him I learned that he then lived in a modest cottage on Indiana Avenue. It was equipped in part with furniture fashioned by his own hands. The other furnishings were made by his accomplished wife. That humble home was hallowed by the love he bore to his sweetheart and two bright-eyed little girls, Maurine and Helen.

"Our nation was at that time in the midst of the great depression of the 1930s. He was the president of Pioneer Stake. Few people in the Church were more severely punished by want and discouragement than were the members of his stake. Although harassed with the problems incident to securing for himself and his loved ones the necessities of life, he grappled mightily with the larger problem of looking after the needs of the total membership of his stake.

"Many there were in that day who, having faltered, turned to state and federal governments for help. Harold B. Lee was not among them. Taking the Lord at his word that man should earn his bread in the sweat of his face and



Harold B. Lee was a pioneer in welfare services. The Pioneer Stake bishops' storehouse was organized in 1932. A dirty warehouse at 33 Pierpont Avenue in Salt Lake City was converted into a bright and cheerful place.



The Church Security program, later known as the Church Welfare program, was initially directed by Harold B. Lee. He is shown explaining a project to Elders George Albert Smith, Marion G. Romney, and Ezra Taft Benson.

convinced that all things are possible to him that believeth, he struck out boldly with the fearless ingenuity and courage of a Brigham Young to pioneer a way whereby his people could, by their own efforts and the help of their brethren, be supplied the necessities of life.

"Directed by the light of heaven, through building projects, production projects, and a variety of other rehabilitation activities, he gave a demonstration of love for his fellowmen seldom equalled in any generation.

"Those who were close to him in those dark days know that he wept over the suffering of his people, but more than that, he did something for them.

"With all his heart he loved and served his fellowmen. He loved the poor, for he had been one of them. 'I have loved you,' he said. 'I have come to know you intimately. Your problems, thank the Lord, have been my problems, because I know as you know what it means to walk when you have not the money to ride. I know what it means to go without meals to buy a book to go to the University. I thank God now for those experiences. I have loved you because of your devotion and faith. God bless you that you won't fail.' (General Conference address, April 6, 1941.)" ("In the Shadow of the Almighty" [funeral address], *Ensign*, Feb. 1974, 96).

## He Sought Earnestly to Know the Needs of the Saints [11.15]

**President Harold B. Lee** shared the following experience that occurred when he was a stake president:

"The first Christmas after I became stake president, our little girls got some dolls and other nice things on Christmas morning, and they immediately dressed and went over to their little friend's home to show her what

Santa Claus had brought them. In a few moments they came back, crying. 'What in the world is the matter?' we asked. 'Donna Mae didn't have any Christmas. Santa Claus didn't come.' And then belatedly we realized that the father had been out of work, and there was no money for Christmas. So we brought the little ones of that family in and divided our Christmas with them, but it was too late. We sat down to Christmas dinner with heavy hearts.

"I resolved then that before another Christmas came, we would be certain that every family in our stake had the same kind of Christmas and the same kind of Christmas dinner that we would have.



Elder Harold B. Lee, about 1942

"The bishops of our stake, under the direction of the stake presidency, made a survey of the stake membership, and we were startled to discover that 4,800 of our members were either wholly or partially dependent—the heads of families did not have steady employment. There were no government make-work projects in those days. We had only ourselves to whom we

could look. We were also told that we couldn't expect much help from the general funds of the Church.

"We knew that we had about one thousand children under ten years of age for whom, without someone to help them, there would be no Christmas, so we started to prepare. We found a second floor over an old store on Pierpont Street. We gathered toys, some of which were broken, and for a month or two before Christmas parents came to help us. Many arrived early or stayed late to make something special for their own little ones. That was the spirit of Christmas giving—one had only to step inside the door of that workshop to see and feel it. Our goal was to see that none of the children would be without a Christmas. We would see that there was Christmas dinner in all the homes of the 4,800 who, without help, would otherwise not have Christmas dinner.

"At that time I was one of the city commissioners. The night before Christmas Eve, we had had a heavy snowstorm, and I had been out all night with the crews getting the streets cleared, knowing that I would be blamed if any of my men fell down on the job. I had then gone home to change my clothes to go to the office.

"As I started back to town, I saw a little boy on the roadside, hitchhiking. He stood in the biting cold with

no coat, no gloves, no overshoes. I stopped and asked where he was going.

"'I'm going uptown to a free picture show,' he said.

"I told him I was also going uptown and that he could ride with me.

"'Son,' I said, 'are you ready for Christmas?'

"'Oh, golly, mister,' he replied, 'we aren't going to have any Christmas at our home. Daddy died three months ago and left Mama and me and a little brother and sister.'

"Three children, all under twelve!

"I turned up the heat in my car and said, 'Now, son, give me your name and address. Somebody will come to your home—you won't be forgotten. And you have a good time; it's Christmas Eve!'

"That night I asked each bishop to go with his delivery men and see that each family was cared for, and to report back to me. While waiting for the last bishop to report, I suddenly, painfully, remembered something. In my haste to see that all my duties at work and my responsibilities in the Church had been taken care of, I had forgotten the little boy and the promise I had made.

"When the last bishop reported, I asked, 'Bishop, have you enough left to visit one more family?'

"'Yes, we have,' he replied.

"I told him the story about the little boy and gave him the address. Later he called to say that that family too had received some well-filled baskets. Christmas Eve was over at last, and I went to bed.

"As I awoke that Christmas morning, I said in my heart, 'God grant that I will never let another year pass but that I, as a leader, will truly know my people. I will know their needs. I will be conscious of those who need my leadership most' " (*Ye Are the Light of the World*, 345–47).

Harold B. Lee's experiences in his youth and in caring for the people of his stake helped prepare him for a future calling.

## The First Presidency Called Him to Further Develop the Church Welfare System [11.16]

The early 1930s were characterized by such phrases as "soup kitchens" and "bread lines." The Great Depression had hit the United States and 25 percent of the normal labor force was unemployed. Other countries were in as bad or even worse condition. Church members were not exempt from the effects of this period, for many had grave financial problems. The Pioneer Stake of Salt

Lake City, for example, had over 50 percent of its male population unemployed. But the Lord had been inspiring his prophets to prepare the Church for such times of difficulty, and the president of that stake, Harold B. Lee, was called to assume an important responsibility in such preparations. In 1941, then newly called as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, **Elder Harold B. Lee** testified of the Lord's hand in establishing the Church welfare program:



**Elder Harold B. Lee in Hawaii, 1945**

“For the last five glorious, strenuous years, I have labored, under a call from the First Presidency, with a group of men in the development of and the unfolding of what we have called the Church Welfare Plan. I felt that I should bear my testimony to you concerning that work. . . . It was on April 20th, 1935, when I was called to the office of the First

Presidency. That was a year before official announcement of the Welfare Plan was made in this Tabernacle. There, after an entire half day session, at which President Grant and President McKay were present, President Clark then being in the East—they had some communications with him, so that all members of the Presidency were in agreement—I was astounded to learn that for years there had been before them, as a result of their thinking and planning and as the result of the inspiration of Almighty God, the genius of the very plan that is being carried out and was in waiting and in preparation for a time when in their judgment the faith of the Latter-day Saints was such that they were willing to follow the counsel of the men who lead and preside in this Church.

“My humble place in this program at that time was described. I left there about noon-time, feeling quite as I do now. I drove with my car up to the head of City Creek Canyon. I got out, after I had driven as far as I could, and I walked up through the trees. I sought my Heavenly Father. As I sat down to pore over this matter, wondering about an organization to be perfected to carry on this work, I received a testimony, on that beautiful spring afternoon, that God had already revealed the greatest organization that ever could be given to mankind, and that all that was needed now was that that organization be set to work, and the temporal welfare of the Latter-day Saints would be safeguarded. . . .

“It was in August of that same year. . . . At that time there was an upturn in business, so much so that some were questioning the wisdom of this kind of activity, and why hadn't the Church done it before now? There came to me, in that early morning hour, a distinct impression that was as real as though someone had spoken audibly, and this was the impression that came, and has stayed with me through these years: There is no individual in the Church that knows the real purpose for which the program then launched had been intended, but hardly before the Church has made sufficient preparation, that reason will be made manifest, and when it comes it will challenge every resource of the Church to meet it. I trembled at the feeling that came over me. Since that day that feeling has driven me on, night and day, hardly resting, knowing that this is God's will, this is His plan. The only thing necessary today is that the Latter-day Saints everywhere recognize these men, who sit here on the stand, as the fountain-heads of truth, through whom God will reveal His will, that His Saints might be preserved through an evil day.

“... I know that the work that we are now advancing and unfolding has still greater potential possibilities. They will come to the extent that the Latter-day Saints will learn to do what they are told, but not until; and some of the grandest things yet to come can only come if and when we learn to listen to these men who preside as prophets, seers and revelators” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1941, 120–22).

## He Was Called as an Apostle [11.17]

President Heber J. Grant called **Harold B. Lee** as an Apostle of the Lord. He was ordained on April 10, 1941. Years later, he shared his feelings about the call:

“I shall never forget my feelings of loneliness the Saturday night after I was told by the President of the Church that I was to be sustained the next day as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve apostles. That was a sleepless night; there ran through my mind all the petty things of my life, the nonsense, the foolishness of youth. I could have told you about those against whom I had any grievances and who had any grievance against me. And before I was to be accepted the next day, I knew that I must stand before the Lord and witness before him that I would love and forgive every soul that walked the earth and in return I would ask him to forgive me that I might be worthy of that position.

“I said, as I suppose all of us would say as we are called to such a position, or any position, ‘President Grant, do you feel that I am worthy of this call?’ And just as quick as a flash, he said, ‘My boy, if I didn't think so, you would never be called to this position.’



Elder Harold B. Lee, his wife, Fern, and their daughters, Maurine and Helen, around the time of his call to the apostleship, 1941

"The Lord knew my heart and he knew that I was not perfect and that all of us have things to overcome. He takes us with imperfections and expects us to begin where we are and make our lives conform fully with the principles and doctrines of Jesus Christ.

"The following day I went to the temple where I was ushered into the room where the Council of the Twelve meet with the presidency each week in an upper room of the temple. I thought of all the great men who have occupied those chairs and now here I was, just a young man, 20 years younger than the next youngest of the twelve, I was being asked now to sit in one of those chairs. It was frightening and startling.

"And then one of the radio committee who had a Sunday night program said, 'Now you know that after having been ordained, you are a special witness to the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ. We want you to give the Easter talk next Sunday night.' That was to bear testimony of the mission of the Lord concerning his resurrection, his life, and ministry, so I went to a room in the Church Office Building where I could be alone, and I read the gospels, particularly those that had to do with the closing days and weeks and months of the life of Jesus, and as I read this I realized that I was having a new experience.

"It wasn't any longer just a story; it seemed as though I was actually seeing the events about which I was reading, and when I gave my talk and closed with a testimony, I said, 'I am now the least of all my brethren

and want to witness to you that I know as I have never known before this call came that Jesus is the Savior of this world. He lives and he died for us.' Why did I know? Because there had come a kind of a witness, that special kind of a witness, that may have been that more sure word of prophecy that one must have if he is to be a special witness" ("Speaking for Himself: President Lee's Stories," *Ensign*, Feb. 1974, 18).

Shortly after his call he toured missions and military bases throughout the world, delivered radio sermons entitled "Youth and the Church," and labored diligently as an advisor to the Primary and Relief Society organizations. He organized two missions in South America and the first stake in England.

## He Loved All People [11.18]

Referring to the night before his sustaining as an Apostle, **Elder Harold B. Lee** related: "I know there are powers that can draw close to one who fills his heart with . . . love. . . . I came to a night, some years ago, when on my bed, I realized that before I could be worthy of the high place to which I had been called, I must love and forgive every soul that walked the earth, and in that time I came to know and I received a peace and a direction, and a comfort, and an inspiration, that told me things to come and gave me impressions that I knew were from a divine source" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1946, 146).



An Apostle quartet, with Elder Harold B. Lee at the piano. Left to right: Elders Mark E. Petersen, Matthew Cowley, Spencer W. Kimball, and Ezra Taft Benson

## The Principles of Priesthood Correlation Were Developed [11.19]

In 1960, under the leadership of President David O. McKay, the **First Presidency** sent the following letter to the General Priesthood Committee, which was under the direction of Elder Harold B. Lee:

“We of the First Presidency have over the years felt the need of a correlation between and among the courses of study put out by the General Priesthood Committee and by the responsible heads of other Committees of the General Authorities for the instruction of the Priesthood of the Church.

“We have also felt the very urgent need of a correlation of studies among the Auxiliaries of the Church. . . .

“We think that the contemplated study by the Committee now set up should have the foregoing matters in mind. We feel assured that if the whole Church curricula were viewed from the vantage point of what we might term the total purpose of each and all of these organizations, it would bring about such a collation and limitation of subjects and subject matters elaborated in the various Auxiliary courses as would tend to the building of efficiency in the Auxiliaries themselves in the matter of carrying out the purposes lying behind their creation and function.

“We would therefore commend to you Brethren of the General Priesthood Committee the beginning of an exhaustive, prayerful study and consideration of this entire subject, with the cooperative assistance of the Auxiliaries themselves so that the Church might reap the maximum harvest from the devotion of the faith, intelligence, skill, and knowledge of our various Auxiliary Organizations and Priesthood Committees” (quoted in Harold B. Lee, in Conference Report, Oct. 1967, 98–99).

These revealed principles were later known as the principles of priesthood correlation. As they were gradually

unfolded before the Church, and particularly to the priesthood leaders, it became evident that this was not just an administrative program to facilitate improved communication and a more effective curriculum; it was the design of the Lord to establish a program of defense against some of the insidious designs of the adversary that were intended to thwart and break down the family and the kingdom of God.

In 1961 Elder Harold B. Lee was appointed chairman of the Church Correlation Committee. Past experience had taught him the challenge of such an assignment. With faith and courage he counseled with other leaders and formulated a plan that spoke of renewed effort in welfare, missionary work, genealogy, education, home teaching, and family home evening. The entire strength of the Church was being marshaled to bless and sustain the home.

## The Priesthood Is Expected to Lead [11.20]

**Elder Harold B. Lee** testified of the Lord’s guidance in developing a Church correlation program:

“Sometimes the startling nature of my assignment has required courage almost beyond my strength. I come to you tonight subdued in spirit, I come to you with a sincere witness that the Lord is revealing and working through channels that he has appointed. Don’t you ever let anybody tell you, the membership of the Church, that the Lord is not today revealing and directing and developing plans which are needed to concentrate the entire forces of this Church to meet the challenge of the insidious forces at work to thwart and to tear down and to undermine the church and kingdom of God.

“I bear you my solemn witness that I know that God is directing this work today and revealing his mind and will. The light is shining through, and if we can get the priesthood now to come alive and to put into full gear the full strength of the priesthood, we shall see some of the most wonderful developments and some of the greatest things happen to the forces which the Lord can set in motion that we have ever known in this dispensation” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1962, 83).



President Lee with four-year-old Scotty Hafen, March of Dimes poster child, 1974



Elder Harold B. Lee in Korea, 1954

## “The Whole Effort of Correlation Is to Strengthen the Home” [11.21]

**Elder Harold B. Lee** taught about “four important factors . . . in developing effective correlation. First, we must see that the whole effort of correlation is to strengthen the home and to give aid to the home in its problems, giving it special aid and succor as needed.

“Second, the strength of the priesthood must be fully employed within the total responsibility of priesthood quorums as clearly set forth in the revelations.

“Third, we must survey the purposes lying behind the creation and purpose of each auxiliary organization.

“And fourth, the prime and ultimate objective of all that is done is the building up of a knowledge of the gospel, a power to promulgate the same, a promotion of the faith, growth, and stronger testimony of the principles of the gospel among the members of the Church” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1964, 80–81).



Elders Harold B. Lee and Gordon B. Hinckley at the Parthenon, in Athens, Greece, 1972

## Church Programs Support the Home [11.22]

In the October 1967 general conference, **Elder Harold B. Lee** reemphasized the need for the various Church programs to support the home: “Again and again has been repeated the statement that the home is the basis of a righteous life. With new and badly needed emphasis on the ‘how,’ we must not lose sight of the ‘why’ we are so engaged. The priesthood programs operate in support of the home; the auxiliary programs render valuable assistance. Wise regional leadership can help us to do our share in attaining God’s overarching purpose, ‘to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.’ (Moses 1:39.) Both the revelations of God and the learning of men tell us how crucial the home is in shaping the individual’s total life experience. You must have been impressed that running through all that has been said in this conference has been the urgency of impressing the importance of better teaching and greater parental responsibility in the home. Much of what we do organizationally, then, is scaffolding, as we seek to build the individual, and we must not mistake the scaffolding for the soul” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1967, 107).

## He Was Refined through His Trials [11.23]

Prophets of God are not immune to the tests and trials of life. They are prepared in the crucible of adversity and suffering. Harold B. Lee’s life received the polishing and refinement that can come only from the touch of the Master’s hand. Through this process he gained experiences that were for his good and for the good of the Lord’s kingdom. The deaths of loved ones, personal physical suffering, and calls that seemed impossible were but a few of his experiences.

Fern, his beloved wife of 39 years, died in 1962. Several months later, **Elder Lee** shared what he learned: “In 1958, just after I had returned with my sweet companion from the Holy Land, I addressed myself to this studentbody on the subject, ‘I Walked Today Where Jesus Walked.’ I described the paths and the lanes we had traveled in that Holy Land where the Master had traveled. But the experiences of the last five months have impressed upon me how short-sighted then was my view of the path where Jesus walked. I have come to learn that only through heartbreak and a lonely walk through the valley of the shadow of death do we really begin to glimpse the path that Jesus walked. Only then can we come to claim kinship with Him who gave His life that men might be” (*Building Your House of Tomorrow*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [Feb. 13, 1963], 11).

Three years later, in 1965, **Elder Lee** endured the loss of his daughter Maurine. He was in Hawaii, away on Church conferences, when he received word of her serious illness and then, shortly thereafter, of her death. Speaking of the anguish of heart in such experiences, he said:

“Many times I personally have wondered at the Master’s cry of anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane. ‘And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.’ (Matt. 26:39.)

“As I advance in years, I begin to understand in some small measure how the Master must have felt. In the loneliness of a distant hotel room 2,500 miles away, you, too, may one day cry out from the depths of your soul as was my experience: ‘O dear God, don’t let her die! I need her; her family needs her.’



He married Freda Joan Jensen on June 17, 1963



President Harold B. Lee

“Neither the Master’s prayer nor my prayer was answered. The purpose of that personal suffering may be only explained in what the Lord said through the Apostle Paul:

“‘Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

‘And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.’ (Heb. 5:8–9.)

“So it is in our day. God grant that you and I may learn obedience to God’s will, if necessary by the things which we suffer” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1965, 130–31).

### His Life Was Spared by Inspiration [11.24]

Although our prayers may not always be answered in the way we desire, the Lord is keenly aware of each of us and our unique challenges. As we seek to do His will and obey His commandments, He will guide and protect us until our days are finished here on this earth. **Elder Harold B. Lee** shared an example of the guidance and protection he received in his life:

“May I impose upon you for a moment to express appreciation for something that happened to me some time ago, years ago [March 1967]. I was suffering from an ulcer condition that was becoming worse and worse. We had been touring a mission; my wife, Joan, and I were impressed the next morning that we should get home as quickly as possible, although we had planned to stay for some other meetings.

“On the way across the country, we were sitting in the forward section of the airplane. Some of our Church members were in the next section. As we approached a certain point en route, someone laid his hand upon my head. I looked up; I could see no one. That happened again before we arrived home, again with the same experience. Who it was, by what means or what medium, I may never know, except I knew that I was receiving a blessing that I came a few hours later to know I needed most desperately.

“As soon as we arrived home, my wife very anxiously called the doctor. It was now about 11 o’clock at night. He called me to come to the telephone, and he asked me

how I was; and I said, ‘Well, I am very tired. I think I will be all right.’ But shortly thereafter, there came massive hemorrhages which, had they occurred while we were in flight, I wouldn’t be here today talking about it.

“I know that there are powers divine that reach out when all other help is not available” (“Stand Ye in Holy Places,” *Ensign*, July 1973, 123).

### Following the Prophet Protects the Sanctity of Our Homes [11.25]

In a 1970 general conference address, **President Harold B. Lee**, then a counselor in the First Presidency, compared avoiding near tragedy on a space flight to being guided to safety in a troubled world:

“Some months ago, millions of watchers and listeners over the world waited breathlessly and anxiously the precarious flight of Apollo 13. The whole world, it seemed, prayed for one significant result: the safe return to earth of three brave men.

“When one of them with restrained anxiety announced the startling information, ‘We have had an explosion!’ the mission control in Houston immediately mobilized all the technically trained scientists who had, over the years, planned every conceivable detail pertaining to that flight.

“The safety of those three now depended on two vital qualifications: on the reliability of the skills and the knowledge of those technicians in the mission control center at Houston, and upon the implicit obedience of the men in the Aquarius to every instruction from the technicians, who, because of their understanding of the problems of the astronauts, were better qualified to find the essential solutions. The decisions of the technicians had to be perfect or the Aquarius could have missed the earth by thousands of miles.



President Harold B. Lee and Elder Ezra Taft Benson

“This dramatic event is somewhat analogous to these troublous times in which we live. . . . Many are frightened when they see and hear of unbelievable happenings the world over—political intrigues, wars and contention everywhere, frustrations of parents, endeavoring to cope with social problems that threaten to break down the sanctity of the home, the frustrations of

children and youth as they face challenges to their faith and their morals.

“Only if *you* are willing to listen and obey, as did the astronauts on the Aquarius, can you and all your households be guided to ultimate safety and security in the Lord’s own way” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1970, 113).

In a later address that same general conference, **President Lee** said: “Now the only safety we have as members of this church is to do exactly what the Lord said to the Church in that day when the Church was organized. We must learn to give heed to the words and commandments that the Lord shall give through his prophet, ‘as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me; . . . as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith.’ (D&C 21:4–5.) There will be some things that take patience and faith. You may not like what comes from the authority of the Church. It may contradict your political views. It may contradict your social views. It may interfere with some of your social life. But if you listen to these things, as if from the mouth of the Lord himself, with patience and faith, the promise is that ‘the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name’s glory.’ (D&C 21:6.)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1970, 152).



Sustaining the new First Presidency: Marion G. Romney, Harold B. Lee, and N. Eldon Tanner

## He Became President of the Church [11.26]

President Joseph Fielding Smith called Elder Harold B. Lee to be a counselor in the First Presidency in 1970; two years later, on July 7, 1972, President Lee was ordained President of the Church. Church members had felt his influence for over 30 years as an Apostle, and now they would feel his firm hand as President of the Church.

He spoke of the priesthood as the greatest power on earth, of the family as the most important of all our labors, of enemies within the Church, and that the safety of the Saints was in giving strict obedience to God’s prophet. He had a Christlike combination of love and firmness for those found in transgression. He reached out in love to help them along the path of repentance. He was concerned about the widowed, the handicapped, and the unmarried.

**Elder Gordon B. Hinckley**, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said of President Lee: “Loyalty to God and his Son, the resurrected Lord. This was the flawless gem in the crown of his life. He was wont to say, ‘Never think of me as the head of this Church. Jesus Christ is the head of this Church. I am only a man, his servant.’ Of him, the Lord, he taught with a remarkable capacity as a teacher. Of him he testified with a persuasiveness almost irresistible. A business leader said to him one day, ‘I believe in the Lord, but I do not have a testimony of the living Lord.’ President Lee replied, ‘Then you lean on my testimony while you study and pray until your own is strong enough to stand alone’” (“Harold Bingham Lee: Humility, Benevolence, Loyalty,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1974, 90).

## His Heart and Mind Went Out in Love to Every Latter-day Saint [11.27]

**President Harold B. Lee** said: “Now I want to tell you a little sacred experience I had following the call to be the president of the Church. On the early morning thereafter with my wife I kneeled in humble prayer, and suddenly it seemed as though my mind and heart went out to over three million people in all the world. I seemed to have a love for every one of them no matter where they lived nor what their color was, whether they were rich or poor, whether they were humble or great, or educated or not. Suddenly I felt as though they all belonged to me, as though they were all my own brothers and sisters” (in Conference Report, Mexico and Central America Area Conference, Aug. 1972, 151).

## He Had Proven Himself before God and His People [11.28]

In his first general conference address as President of the Church, **Harold B. Lee** looked back at his life and contemplated experiences he had passed through that had sometimes been difficult to understand:

“The day after this appointment, following the passing of our beloved President Smith, my attention was called to a paragraph from a sermon delivered in 1853 in a general

conference by Elder Orson Hyde, then a member of the Twelve. This provoked some soul-searching in me also.

“The subject of his address was ‘The Man to Lead God’s People,’ and I quote briefly from his sermon: ‘. . . it is invariably the case,’ he said, ‘that when an individual is ordained and appointed to lead the people, he has passed through tribulations and trials, and has proven himself before God, and before His people, that he is worthy of the situation which he holds. . . . that when a person has not been tried, that has not proved himself before God, and before His people, and before the councils of the Most High, to be worthy, he is not going to step in and lead the Church and people of God. It has never been so, but from the beginning some one that understands the Spirit and counsel of the Almighty, that knows the Church, and is known of her, is the character that will lead the Church.’ (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, p. 123.)

“As I have known of the lives of those who have preceded me, I have been made aware that each seemed to have had his special mission for his day and time.

“Then, with searching introspection, I thought of myself and my experiences of which Orson Hyde’s appraisal had made reference. Then I recalled the words of the Prophet Joseph’s characterization of himself, which seemed somewhat analogous to myself. He said:

“‘I am like a huge rough stone rolling down from a high mountain; and the only polishing I get is when some corner gets rubbed off by coming in contact with something else, striking with accelerated force against religious bigotry, priestcraft, lawyer-craft, doctor-craft, lying editors, suborned judges and jurors, and the authority of perjured executives, backed by mobs, blasphemers, licentious and corrupt men and women—all hell knocking off a corner here and a corner there. Thus will I become a smooth and polished shaft in the quiver of the Almighty. . . .’ (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 304.)



President Lee at the Garden Tomb, Jerusalem, September 1972

“These thoughts now running through my mind begin to give greater meaning to some of the experiences in my life, things that have happened which have been difficult for me to understand. At times it seemed as though I too was like a rough stone rolling down from a high mountainside, being buffeted and polished, I suppose, by experiences, that I too might overcome



President Lee, with interpreter, speaking at the Olympic Hall in Munich, Germany

and become a polished shaft in the quiver of the Almighty.

“Maybe it was necessary that I too must learn obedience by the things that I might have suffered—to give me experiences that were for my good, to see if I could pass some of the various tests of mortality” (“May the Kingdom of God Go Forth,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1973, 24–25).

## The Members of the Church Must Prepare Themselves for the Conflict with Evil [11.29]

**President Harold B. Lee** taught:

“The members of this church throughout the world must brace themselves for the never-ending contest between the forces of righteousness and the forces of evil. . . .

“If we follow the leadership of the priesthood, the Lord will fulfill his promise contained in the preface to his revelations, when Satan would have power over his own dominion. This was his promise: ‘. . . the Lord shall have power over his saints, and shall reign in their midst, and shall come down in judgment upon . . . the world.’ (D&C 1:36.)

“I earnestly urge all our people to unite under the true banner of the Master, to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ so powerfully that no truly converted person could ever be aligned with these controversial concepts and procedures contrary to the Lord’s plan of salvation” (“Teach the Gospel of Salvation,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1973, 62–63).

## Safety Comes from Keeping God’s Commandments [11.30]

**President Harold B. Lee** said: “I am convinced that the greatest of all the underlying reasons for the strength of this church is that those who keep the commandments of God are 100 percent behind the leadership of this church. Without that united support it would be readily understood that this church could not go forward to meet the challenges of the day. Our call is for the total membership of the Church to keep the commandments of God, for therein lies the safety of the world” (“Strengthen the Stakes of Zion,” *Ensign*, July 1973, 6).

## The Church Is a Defense and a Refuge

[11.31]

When he was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, **Elder Harold B. Lee** said:

“Almost imperceptibly we see the hand of the Lord moving to do things, and this I construe to be a consolidation of the forces of the Lord under the direction of the prophet, just as in an army, in order to meet a superior force of the enemy in numbers, the forces of our opposition to the forces of evil must be consolidated in order to give them the most effective possible defense.

“We are in a program of defense. The Church of Jesus Christ was set upon this earth in this day ‘. . . for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it should be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth.’ (D&C 115:6.)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1961, 81).

On another occasion he quoted a prophecy of **President Heber C. Kimball** as being applicable to our day:

“President Heber C. Kimball, shortly after the Saints had arrived here in the mountains—and some, I suppose, were somewhat gloating over the fact that they had triumphed for a temporary period over their enemies—had this to say: ‘. . . we think we are secure here in the chambers of the everlasting hills, where we can close those few doors of the canyons against mobs and persecutors, the wicked and the vile, who have always beset us with violence and robbery, but I want to say to you,



President Harold B. Lee and President Spencer W. Kimball, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, at the area conference in Munich, Germany, August 1973. More than 14,000 Church members attended from eight European countries.

my brethren, the time is coming when we will be mixed up in these now peaceful valleys to that extent that it will be difficult to tell the face of a Saint from the face of an enemy to the people of God. Then, brethren, look out for the great sieve, for there will be a great sifting time, and many will fall; for I say unto you there is a *test*, a TEST, a TEST coming, and who will be able to stand? . . .

“‘Let me say to you, that many of you will see the time when you will have all the trouble, trial and



President Harold B. Lee

persecution that you can stand, and plenty of opportunities to show that you are true to God and his work. This Church has before it many close places through which it will have to pass before the work of God is crowned with victory. To meet the difficulties that are coming, it will be necessary for you to have a knowledge of the truth of this work for yourselves. The difficulties will be of such a character that the man or woman who does not possess this personal knowledge or witness will fall. If you have not got the testimony, live right and call upon the Lord and cease not till you obtain it. If you do not you will not stand.

“‘Remember these sayings, for many of you will live to see them fulfilled. The time will come when no man nor woman will be able to endure on borrowed light. Each will have to be guided by the light within himself. If you do not have it, how can you stand?’ (*Life of Heber C. Kimball*, pp. 446, 449–450.)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1965, 128).

Then, as President of the Church, **Harold B. Lee** gave the following admonition: “The greatest challenge we have today is to teach the members of this church to keep the commandments of God. Never before has there been such a challenge to the doctrine of righteousness and purity and chastity. The moral standards are being eroded by powers of evil. There is nothing more important for us to do than to teach as powerfully, led by the Spirit of the Lord, as we can in order to persuade our people in the world to live close [to] the Lord in this hour of great temptation” (quoted in J. M. Heslop, “President Harold B. Lee: Directs Church; Led by the Spirit,” *Church News*, July 15, 1972, 4).

## The Destructive Influences of the World Are Threatening the Family [11.32]

When he was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, **Elder Harold B. Lee** had urged families to hold a weekly home evening: “Greater emphasis on the teaching of the children in the home by the parents was brought forth in what we call the family home evening program. This was not new. Fifty years ago it was given emphasis; and as we went back into history, we found that in the last epistle written to the Church by President Brigham Young and his counselors, it was urged that parents bring their children together and teach them the gospel in the home frequently. So family home evening has been urged ever since the Church was established in this dispensation” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1967, 101). Later, with the adversary ever increasing his attack on the family, **President Lee** spoke out:

“These are challenging times. Around the world there are influences which would strike at the home, at the sacred relationships of husband and wife, of parents and their children. The same destructive influences face our unmarried adult members of the Church.

“How fortunate we are in the midst of all this to have the teachings of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the head of the Church. His words, and those of his prophets, are ours to help us strengthen our homes and bring more peace and happiness into them.

“There is no other people on the face of the earth, whom I know anything about, who have the lofty concepts of marriage and the sacredness of the home as do the Latter-day Saints. In a revelation given in our day the Lord said:



President Lee speaking in the Salt Lake Tabernacle

‘Marriage is ordained of God unto man. Wherefore, it is lawful that he should have one wife, and they twain shall be one flesh, and all this that the earth might answer the end of its creation.’ (D&C 49:15, 16.)

“There are, however, unmistakable evidences that the same dangers that are abroad in the world are now among us and are seeking to destroy this God-given institution, the home” (*Strengthening the Home* [pamphlet, 1973], 1–2).

## The Objective of the Church Is to Help the Saints Meet the Problems of the Day [11.33]

**President Harold B. Lee** taught: “There is one grand objective in all this great Church organization. . . . That objective is to provide for and to promote the spiritual, temporal and social salvation or welfare of every one who has membership in one of these priesthood or auxiliary groups, and if each such group is moved by the power and righteousness of the principles inherent therein, ‘they will have all the power necessary to meet every problem in this modern and changing world.’ (Brigham Young.)” (*Decisions for Successful Living*, 211).

## The Greatest Miracles Are the Healing of Sick Souls [11.34]

**President Harold B. Lee** said: “The great call has come now in the sermons of the brethren to aid those who are in need of aid, not just temporal aid, but spiritual aid. The greatest miracles I see today are not necessarily the healing of sick bodies, but the greatest miracles I see are the healing of sick souls, those who are sick in soul and spirit and are downhearted and distraught, on the verge of nervous breakdowns. We are reaching out to all such, because they are precious in the sight of the Lord, and we want no one to feel that they are forgotten” (“Stand Ye in Holy Places,” 123).

## The Passing of a Prophet [11.35]

President Harold B. Lee died on December 26, 1973. Though his administration as President of the Church lasted only 18 months, his teachings and influence in the leading councils of the Church had been profound for decades. Some felt that his passing was untimely, but the death of a man of God is never untimely. His successor, **President Spencer W. Kimball**, said at his funeral, “A giant redwood has fallen and left a great space in the forest” (“A Giant of a Man,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1974, 86).

President Lee’s sister, Verda Lee Ross, said, “Anyone who came into his home was a prince or a princess. He treated them like royalty. He was a most gracious host. It was difficult ever to see him standing while he was with a group, because he would be kneeling down talking to a child or bent over giving comfort to an elderly person. Everyone meant something to [him]. He loved people—all people” (from an interview with members of the Lee family conducted by the CES College Curriculum staff, July 6, 1978).



President Harold B. Lee



# Spencer W. Kimball

Twelfth President of the Church

# 12

## Highlights in the Life of Spencer W. Kimball

Age	Events
	He was born March 28, 1895, in Salt Lake City, Utah, to Andrew and Olive Woolley Kimball.
9	A patriarch stated that he would work among the Lamanites.
11	His mother died (1906).
19	He graduated with highest honors from Gila Academy (1914).
19–21	He served a mission to the central United States (1914–16).
22	He married Camilla Eyring (Nov. 16, 1917).
43–48	He was president of the Mount Graham Stake (1938–43).
48	He was ordained an Apostle by President Heber J. Grant (Oct. 7, 1943).
51	He was chairman of the Church Indian Committee (1946).
62	He suffered cancer of the throat; one and a half vocal cords were removed (1957).
69–72	He supervised missionary work in South America (1964–67).
74	His book <i>The Miracle of Forgiveness</i> was published (1969); he became Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (Jan. 23, 1970).
77	He was set apart as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (July 7, 1972).
78	He became President of the Church (Dec. 30, 1973).
79	He addressed the regional representatives of the Twelve, initiating expanded missionary work (Apr. 4, 1974); he dedicated the Washington D.C. Temple (Nov. 19, 1974).
80	He dedicated the Church Office Building (July 24, 1975); 15 stakes were created from 5 in Mexico City, Mexico (Nov. 9, 1975); the building of temples in Brazil, Japan, Mexico, and Washington state was announced (1975).
81	Two revelations were added to the Pearl of Great Price (now D&C 137–38; Apr. 3, 1976); Assistants to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles became members of the First Quorum of the Seventy (1976).
83	The First Presidency announced the revelation that every faithful man in the Church may receive the holy priesthood (June 8, 1978).
84, 86	New editions of the scriptures, cross-referenced to each other, were printed (1979, 1981).
84	He dedicated the Orson Hyde Memorial Garden in Jerusalem (Oct. 24, 1979).
89	Area Presidencies were first called (1984).
90	A new edition of the hymnbook, with additional hymns of the Restoration, was printed; he died in Salt Lake City, Utah (Nov. 5, 1985).

## He Grew Up in Thatcher, Arizona [12.1]

Spencer Woolley Kimball was born March 28, 1895, in Salt Lake City, Utah, to Andrew and Olive Woolley Kimball. The next January, Utah was granted statehood. The Manifesto was five years old, the economy was going into an upswing, and the Saints were entering an era of relative calm.

When Spencer W. Kimball was three years old, his family moved to Thatcher, Arizona. There he had cows to milk, gardens to weed, and buildings to paint. He demanded much of himself. In school, in church, and at play, he sought excellence. He abstained totally from whatever would pollute the body. He was president of his deacons quorum and continued in leadership positions, serving in each position with steadfastness and devotion.

## The Heritage of Spencer W. Kimball [12.2]

“Like Nephi of old, [Spencer W. Kimball] may thank the Lord that he came of goodly parentage. His two grandfathers were outstanding colonizers and peers among men. Heber C. Kimball was an apostle of the Lord, friend and disciple of the Prophet Joseph, counselor to President Young, and missionary extraordinary for his church; Edwin D. Woolley was a colorful Salt Lake leader, business manager for President Young, and a great bishop of the Thirteenth Ward for a period of forty years. His own father, Andrew Kimball, was likewise a most remarkable man. Energetic and zealous always, as an advocate of the restored gospel, he presided over the mission in the Indian Territory for ten years and at intervals returned to Salt Lake to earn a living for his family. For twenty-six and a half years, from 1898 to the day of his death, he was president of the St. Joseph Stake of Zion, the stake which had been named at the suggestion



Andrew and Olive Kimball with their children, 1897. Spencer is sitting on his father's lap.

of President John Taylor in honor of the Prophet Joseph. His ability as a builder and organizer did much toward the development of a great agricultural empire in eastern Arizona, and in the years of his administration the stake developed from a few wards on the Gila River to some seventeen wards and branches of the church, extending from Miami, Arizona, to El Paso, Texas” (Jesse A. Udall, “Spencer W. Kimball, the Apostle from Arizona,” *Improvement Era*, Oct. 1943, 590).

## His Early Experiences Prepared Him for Later Service [12.3]

Spencer W. Kimball had many close calls with death—near drowning, accidents, extremely serious illnesses, and operations. His daughter Olive Beth Kimball Mack said: “Dad has had a great deal of sorrow and sickness and many difficulties to overcome. These have only served to make him a stronger person, and have given him much empathy for others. . . . He lost his mother when he was eleven, and soon after, a little sister was taken. This is what he writes of this time:

“There came a rushing back through my memory an old picture of anguish, terror, fear, hopelessness. There we were, eight of my mother’s eleven in our parent’s bedroom. Our mother was dead, our father away, our older brother Gordon sat in the chair holding our littlest sister while she died, with all of us youngsters around the chair, frightened, and praying, and weeping. The doctor was miles away. His horse and buggy could not possibly have brought him there soon enough, and what could he do if he arrived? It seemed to be a combination of diphtheria and membranous croup, and little Rachel was literally choking to death. In terror we watched the little body fight valiantly for air and life, then suddenly



Andrew Kimball, father of Spencer W. Kimball



Olive Woolley Kimball, mother of Spencer W. Kimball

relax completely. The hard fought battle was over. She had lost' " (*How a Daughter Sees Her Father, the Prophet* [devotional address at the Salt Lake institute of religion, Apr. 9, 1976], 3–4).

Writing about the life of this extraordinary man, **Elder Boyd K. Packer** used **Spencer W. Kimball's** own words to describe him:

"President Kimball once said, 'What mother, looking down with tenderness upon her chubby infant does not envision her child as the president of the Church or the leader of her nation! As he is nestled in her arms, she sees him a statesman, a leader, a prophet. Some dreams do come true! One mother gives us a Shakespeare, another a Michelangelo, and another an Abraham Lincoln, and still another a Joseph Smith.



Spencer W. Kimball and Clarence Naylor

"'When theologians are reeling and stumbling, when lips are pretending and hearts are wandering, and people are "running to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord and cannot find it"—when clouds of error need dissipating and spiritual darkness needs penetrating and heavens need opening, a little infant is born.' (Conference address, April 4, 1960.)

"And so came Spencer Woolley Kimball. The Lord

had managed those humble beginnings. He was not just preparing a businessman, nor a civic leader, nor a speaker, nor a poet, nor a musician, nor a teacher—though he would be all of these. He was preparing a father, a patriarch for his family, an apostle and prophet, and a president for His church" ("President Spencer W. Kimball: No Ordinary Man," *Ensign*, Mar. 1974, 3).

## He Had Perfect Attendance at Sunday School and Primary [12.4]

"From childhood he has been most conscientious in his work—nothing short of the best was good enough. For years he had a record of perfect attendance at Sunday School and Primary. One Monday he was in the field tramping hay for his older brothers when the meeting-house bell rang for Primary.

"'I've got to go to Primary,' he timidly suggested.

"'You can't go today; we need you,' they said.

"'Well, Father would let me go, if he were here,' the boy countered.

"'Father isn't here,' they said, 'and you are not going.'

"The piles of hay came pouring up, literally covering Spencer, but finally he had caught up; sliding noiselessly from the back of the wagon, he was halfway to the meetinghouse before his absence was noticed, and his perfect record remained unbroken. . . .

"... Like Daniel, Spencer has never defiled himself. If you were to ask him point-blank if he had always observed the Word of Wisdom, he would modestly tell you that he had never tasted tea, coffee, liquor nor tobacco" (Udall, *Improvement Era*, Oct. 1943, 591).

## His Father Had Intimations of Young Spencer's Future Greatness [12.5]

"Ten-year-old Spencer Woolley Kimball liked to help his father with the chores. Perched on a stool, the lad sang happily as he milked one of the cows. He was completely oblivious at the moment to his father standing in the barn doorway talking to a neighbor who had just delivered a load of pumpkins for the pigs.

"'That boy, Spencer, is an exceptional boy,' President Kimball [Spencer's father, a stake president] was saying. 'He always tries to mind me, whatever I ask him to do. I have dedicated him to be one of the mouthpieces of the Lord—the Lord willing. You will see him some day as a



Life on the farm; the Kimball brothers, Gordon, Spencer, and Del, on top of a hay wagon near their Thatcher, Arizona, home

great leader. I have dedicated him to the service of God, and he will become a mighty man in the Church.'

"Even while milking the cows, Spencer was justifying the faith and confidence of his father, for he was vocalizing with a purpose. On a piece of paper lying on the floor by the milk bucket, he had the words of the hymn he was singing. He practiced thus every day so that he could learn the words of the Church hymns by heart. He often did the same thing with verses of scripture, memorizing them for future use" ("Early Prophecies Made about Mission of Elder Kimball," *Church News*, Nov. 18, 1961, 16).

## When He Was Young He Set a Goal to Read the Bible [12.6]

In a 1974 general conference address, **President Spencer W. Kimball** spoke of the satisfaction he felt after reaching a goal he set as a youth:

"Let me tell you of one of the goals that I made when I was still but a lad. When I heard a Church leader from Salt Lake City tell us at conference that we should read the scriptures, and I recognized that I had never read the Bible, that very night at the conclusion of that very sermon I walked to my home a block away and climbed up in my little attic room in the top of the house and lighted a little coal-oil lamp that was on the little table, and I read the first chapters of Genesis. A year later I closed the Bible, having read every chapter in that big and glorious book.

"I found that this Bible that I was reading had in it 66 books, and then I was nearly dissuaded when I found that it had in it 1,189 chapters, and then I also found that it had 1,519 pages. It was formidable, but I knew if others did it that I could do it.



Reading by coal oil lamp

"I found that there were certain parts that were hard for a 14-year-old boy to understand. There were some pages that were not especially interesting to me, but when I had read the 66 books and 1,189 chapters and 1,519 pages, I had a glowing satisfaction that I had made a goal and that I had achieved it.

"Now I am not telling you this story to boast; I am merely using this as an example to say that if I could do it by coal-oil light, you can do it by electric light. I have always been glad I read the Bible from cover to cover" ("Planning for a Full and Abundant Life," *Ensign*, May 1974, 88).

## He Was a Scholar and an Athlete [12.7]

"The young Spencer grew to maturity at Thatcher. Having completed the public schools he entered the Gila Academy, the institution which had been established by the church early in the colonization of the valley. Later, its name was changed to the Gila Junior College. In 1914 he was graduated with highest honors and as president of his class. In addition to his scholastic achievements he was a star forward on the basketball team, and many a game was won by his accurate goal-throwing from every angle on the floor" (Udall, *Improvement Era*, Oct. 1943, 591).

Many years later, as he lay sleepless on a hospital bed, **President Spencer W. Kimball** reflected upon one of his early basketball experiences:

"I am on the basketball court. We play in our overalls and shirts with cheap rubber shoes and with basketballs of our own buying. We have beaten Globe High School on our dirt court, and we have defeated Safford and other high schools. Now, tonight, we Academy boys are playing the University of Arizona team.

"It is a great occasion. Many people come tonight who have never been before. Some of the townsmen say basketball is a girl's game, but nevertheless they come in large numbers tonight. Our court is not quite regulation. We are used to it, our opponents are not. I have special luck with my shots tonight, the ball goes through the hoop again and again, and the game ends with our high school team the victors against the college team. I am the smallest player and the youngest on the team. I have piled up the most points through the efforts of the whole team in protecting me and feeding the ball to me. I am



Spencer W. Kimball (middle of front row) at the Globe Dairy, 1914



Graduation from the eighth grade. Spencer W. Kimball is in the second row, second from the right.

on the shoulders of the big fellows of the Academy. They are parading me around the hall to my consternation and embarrassment" (*One Silent Sleepless Night* [1975], 57).

## He Learned to Do Things Correctly [12.8]

Years later, **President Spencer W. Kimball** told about more of his responsibilities growing up:

"There is the harness shed. Pa is very meticulous with the harnesses. They must always be hanging up when not on the horses. The collars must be smooth and clean, the bridles fitting just right, the blinds in place. The harness must be washed with Ivory soap frequently and then oiled, and I learn another important lesson: the leather equipment must never be dry and hard and curled.

"There is the buggy shed. The surrey and the one-seated buggy must always be in shelter from storm and sun, and they must be clean. I learn to wash vehicles and grease



Gila Academy basketball team, 1912–13. Spencer W. Kimball is on the far right.

them. In a little pocket on the right side of the building is the axle-grease can and dauber. I lift one side at a time to the wooden horse, remove the wheel, grease the axle carefully, replace the nut, and screw it on to keep it in place. The wagons must be similarly treated as often as needed. And they must be painted too. I learn while yet a very small boy how to buy and mix paint and apply it to body and wheels and framework. The hairline of trim paint must be applied with precision. The fences must all be whitewashed and the trellis painted green.

The house, the big house, needs paint too, and I climb the high ladders and paint the gable ends of the house and the trim. Pa does most of it at first, then I gradually come into the program until it is my task almost exclusively. And the barn and granary and harness shed—all must be painted at intervals. Even the mangers" (*One Silent Sleepless Night*, 20).



Young Spencer W. Kimball

## He Was a Dedicated and Committed Missionary [12.9]

"While milking cows back in May 1914, . . . Spencer had received his letter from Box B, Salt Lake City, calling him to proselyte in the Swiss-German Mission. The letter, signed by Joseph F. Smith, sixth President of the Church, stated he should leave in October. Europe was an exotic, exciting prospect. The German that Spencer had studied at the Academy would give him a head start on learning the language.

"Then in July the situation in Europe changed drastically. A Serbian student assassinated Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary. On July 28 Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. The conflict quickly spread to Germany, Russia, France, Belgium and Britain.

"Because of the European war Spencer's missionary assignment was switched to the Central States Mission, whose headquarters were in Independence, Missouri. He felt disappointed. But he reconciled himself to the change; this had been his father's mission area and his stepmother's and his brother Gordon's. As the train crossed the Arizona and California deserts into Nevada and Utah, Spencer, a newly ordained elder, looked ahead with apprehension at the pending changes in his life, but



He was called as a missionary to the Central States Mission in 1915.

with curiosity and excitement as well.

"Since missionaries or their families paid their mission expenses, Spencer had sold his spirited young black horse for \$175, enough money to keep him for six months. To that he added his wages at the dairy. What money he still lacked, his father added. But these arrangements didn't make for luxurious living" (Edward L. Kimball and Andrew E. Kimball Jr., *Spencer W. Kimball* [1977], 72–73).

Elder Kimball faced sorrow and discouragement while serving as a missionary. In May 1915 he received word from his father that his 21-year-old sister, Ruth,

had died. Many people were not receptive to his message and the responsibilities placed upon him were great. Yet he continued to work diligently.

After 14 months in the mission field, he was made conference president in the Saint Louis area. This was an intimidating assignment for him. He was younger than most of the 35 missionaries for whom he was responsible. Yet his hard work and dependence on the Lord brought success.

Tracting and street meetings were a regular part of a missionary's work, and Elder Kimball became creative with some of his door approaches. "He would tell missionaries a story years later about using ingenuity in making contacts. While tracting in St. Louis he noticed a piano through the partly opened door, and he said to the woman, who was in the act of shutting the door in his face, 'You have a nice-looking piano.'

"'We just bought it,' said the woman, hesitating.

"'It's a Kimball, isn't it? That's my name, too. I could play a song on it for you that you might like to hear.'

"Surprised, she answered, 'Surely, come in.'

"Sitting on the bench, Spencer played and sang, 'O, My Father.'

"So far as Spencer knew, she never joined the Church, but it was not because he had not tried" (Kimball and Kimball, *Spencer W. Kimball*, 79–80).

Elder Kimball enjoyed street meetings. "A favorite place for them was at the corner of Twentieth and Franklin. While some questioned the value of these meetings, Elder Kimball never did. They gave him a sense of exhilaration unmatched by any other kind of proselyting. They also provided memorable moments such as the time when, at the end of a meeting, with not a soul in sight except the missionaries, the elder conducting solemnly announced, 'If you'll all give your attention, we'll dismiss,' or when Elder Kimball ended his talk in midsentence when the only people he could see were his three companions" (Francis M. Gibbons, *Spencer W. Kimball: Resolute Disciple, Prophet of God* [1995], 51).

## He Found a Charming Helpmate [12.10]

Spencer W. Kimball returned home from his mission in January 1917. That August he reported on his mission in a stake conference. At that stake conference was Camilla Eyring, a young woman to whom Spencer had been casually introduced before his mission. Four days later they met at a bus stop. Spencer reintroduced himself and they had their first personal conversation sitting together on the bus. He inquired, during the conversation, if he could call on Camilla. She responded in the affirmative.

"But she did not expect him to call unannounced. When he arrived at her home one evening soon after their bus ride she was dressed in a kimono, hair up in curlers, preparing to go dancing with a boyfriend and some other friends. Camilla did not know what to do. So she sat with young Mr. Kimball on the porch and talked, expecting his visit to end at any moment, until it became obvious he had no intention of leaving.

"'I was in a pickle,' Camilla later said. Though she wanted to favor Spencer, she already had a date, so she fudged. She told Spencer that a crowd was going dancing. Did he want to come? Spencer, delighted with his good luck, said yes, so when Alvin drove up in his car with the others, Camilla asked if a friend could come along. The two piled in the car and Alvin let his rage out through his foot. He drove, said Camilla, 'like the devil was after him.' By the time the car pulled up to the dance hall in Layton, Alvin was through with Camilla. He wouldn't dance with her again for fifteen years. 'I played



Elder Spencer W. Kimball (left) and his companion Elder L. M. Hawkes, June 1915; missionaries in Missouri



Spencer and Camilla Kimball, February 1918

a shabby trick,' Camilla admitted" (Kimball and Kimball, *Spencer W. Kimball*, 84; see also Gibbons, *Spencer W. Kimball*, 63–64).

Their relationship blossomed, and Spencer and Camilla were married on November 16, 1917. The following tribute was later paid to Camilla:

"How much a man's success depends upon his wife! Elder Kimball has been favored with a charming helpmate who has been constant, patient, full of understanding and encouragement. Her training in, and teaching of, home economics has enabled her to feed and clothe her family well, even though the income sometimes was small. Camilla is the daughter of Edward Christian Eyring and Caroline Romney. They had come to Arizona from Mexico in 1912 as a result of the Mexican revolution. It was in 1917 when she was teaching at the Gila Academy at Thatcher that she met Spencer, and it was not many months before their courtship ripened into marriage. It is said that 'transplanted flowers are usually the fairest' and so it was in her case; the blue-eyed, golden-haired girl with the Spanish name, transplanted from Mexico, blossomed into glorious womanhood as an intelligent, well-trained woman, prominent in her own right" (Udall, *Improvement Era*, Oct. 1943, 591).



Spencer W. Kimball, about 1933

## Leadership Opportunities Prepared Him for His Apostleship [12.11]

One year after his release from his mission, at the age of 23, Spencer W. Kimball was called as stake clerk of the St. Joseph Stake in Safford, Arizona. Six years later, in 1924, he was also sustained as a counselor in the stake presidency. At times he served in both callings. When the stake was divided in 1938, he was called to be president of the new Mount Graham Stake. Five and a half years later, on October 7, 1943, after over a quarter of a century in stake leadership, he was ordained an Apostle and became a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

"[Elder] Kimball possesses so many qualities which fit him for church leadership that it is difficult to point out particular traits and say therein lies his success. Two of his outstanding characteristics are, first, his love for people, a love which begets love; people warm to his teachings; his dealings instill confidence; the well-to-do farmer or the humble laborer, the housewife or the adolescent boy or girl, all have confidence in his integrity; and second, his relentless attention to the duties of the day. . . . The new apostle has lived his life in such a manner that it would appear that he is in the presence of God at all times, and that not for one moment of his busy life has he forgotten his responsibility to his creator" (Udall, *Improvement Era*, Oct. 1943, 639).



Snowshoeing in Arizona; climbing Mount Graham, 1938

Spencer W. Kimball had also spent 25 successful years in banking, insurance, and real estate. He helped organize the Gila Broadcasting Company and the Gila Valley Irrigation Company and served in important leadership assignments in these ventures. He was a district governor of Rotary International, president of the Safford Rotary Club, a member of the Gila Junior College Board of Trustees, a member of the Arizona Teachers Retirement Board, vice-president of the Roosevelt Council of Boy Scouts, chairman of the local USO (United Services Organization), chairman of the United War Fund campaign in Graham County, and master of ceremonies at endless Church and civic functions. As a pianist and singer he was in constant demand. For many years he was a member of a popular quartet called the Conquistadores.



Spencer Kimball when he was a stake president, 1942 (middle of the front row)

### He Was Humbled by His Calling [12.12]

In the October 1943 general conference, on the day he was sustained as an Apostle, **Elder Spencer W. Kimball** addressed the congregation, recalling his earlier appointment to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“I believe the brethren were very kind to me in announcing my appointment when they did so that I might make the necessary adjustments in my business affairs, but perhaps they were more inspired to give me the time that I needed of a long period of purification, for in those long days and weeks I did a great deal of thinking and praying, and fasting and praying. There were conflicting thoughts that surged through my mind—seeming voices saying: ‘You can’t do the work. You are not worthy. You have not the ability’—and always finally came the triumphant thought: ‘You must do the work assigned—you must make yourself able, worthy and qualified.’ And the battle raged on.



A family portrait

“I remember reading that Jacob wrestled all night, ‘until the breaking of the day,’ for a blessing; and I want to tell you that for eighty-five nights I have gone through that experience, wrestling for a blessing. Eighty-five times, the breaking of the day has found me on my knees praying to the Lord to help me and strengthen me and make me equal to this great responsibility that has come to me” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1943, 15–16).

### He Had a Great Love for the Children of Lehi [12.13]

**Elder Spencer W. Kimball** explained:

“I do not know when I began to love the children of Lehi. It may have come to me at birth, because those years preceding and after I was born, were spent by my father on missions among the Indians in Indian territory. He was president of the mission. This love may have come in those first years of my childhood, when my father used to sing the Indian chants to us children and show us souvenirs from and pictures of his Indian friends. It may have come from my patriarchal blessing which was given to me by Patriarch Samuel Claridge, when I was nine years of age. One line of the blessing reads:

“‘You will preach the gospel to many people, but more especially to the Lamanites, for the Lord will bless you with the gift of language and power to portray before that people, the gospel in great plainness. You will see them organized and be prepared to stand as the bulwark “round this people.”’ . . .

“ . . . We have about a half-million children of Lehi in the islands of the sea, and about sixty million of them in North and South America, about a third of them perhaps, being pure-blood Indians, and about two-thirds are mixtures, but they have the blood of Jacob in their veins.

“Someone said:

“‘If my pen might have the gift of tears I would write a book and call it “The Indian,” and I would make the whole world weep.’

“I hope I may help to make the whole world weep for the children of Lehi. Can one refrain from tears as he



Elder Kimball in the Southwest



**"Look after the children of Lehi." Elder Spencer W. Kimball, President George Albert Smith, Elder Anthony W. Ivins (standing), and Elder Matthew Cowley meet with a group of Native Americans soon after the three Apostles were called to serve on the Church Indian Affairs Committee.**

contemplates the fall of these people who have been brought down from culture and achievement to illiteracy and degradation: from kings and emperors, to slavery and serfdom; from landowners of vast continents, to indigent wards of governments and peons—from sons of God with a knowledge of God, to rude savages, victims of superstition, and from builders of temples to dwellers in dirt hogans. . . .

"How I wish you could go with me through the Indian reservations and particularly Navajo Land and see the poverty, want, and wretchedness, and realize again that these are sons and daughters of God; that their miserable state is the result, not only of their centuries of wars and sins and godlessness, but is also attributable to us, their conquerors, who placed them on reservations with such limited resources and facilities, to starve and die of malnutrition and unsanitary conditions, while we become fat in the prosperity from the assets we took from them. Think of these things, my people, and then weep for the Indian, and with your tears, pray; then work for him. Only through us, the 'nursing fathers and mothers,' may they eventually enjoy a fulfillment of the many promises made to them. Assuming that we do our duty to them, the Indians and other sons of Lehi will yet rise in power and strength. The Lord will remember his covenant to them; his Church will be established among them; the Bible and other scriptures will be made available to them; they will enter into the holy temples for their endowments and do vicarious work; they will come to a knowledge of their fathers and to a perfect knowledge of their Redeemer Jesus Christ; they shall prosper in the land and will, with our help, build up a holy city, even the New Jerusalem, unto their God" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1947, 144–45, 151–52).

## An Apostle Is a Special Witness of Christ [12.14]

"After his call to the Twelve [Elder Spencer W. Kimball] suffered a series of heart attacks. The doctors said that he must rest. He wanted to be with his beloved Indians. Brother Golden R. Buchanan took him to the camp of Brother and Sister Polacca, high in the pines of Arizona, and there he stayed during the weeks until his heart mended and his strength returned.

"One morning he was missing from camp. When he did not return for breakfast, Brother Polacca and other Indian friends began to search. They found him several miles from camp, sitting beneath a large pine tree with his Bible open to the last chapter of the Gospel of John. In answer to their worried looks, he said, 'Six years ago today I was called to be an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. And I just wanted to spend the day with Him whose witness I am.'

"His heart problems recurred, but did not slow him down for long" (Packer, "President Kimball: No Ordinary Man," 4).

## He Had Cancer of the Throat and Vocal Cords [12.15]

In 1957, after several years of problems with hoarseness, Elder Spencer W. Kimball was diagnosed with cancer of the throat and vocal cords. The doctors said he would lose his voice, the very focal point of his life and service as an Apostle. **Elder Boyd K. Packer** wrote:

"This, perhaps, was to be his Gethsemane.

"He went East for the operation. Elder Harold B. Lee was there. As he was prepared for surgery he agonized over the ominous possibilities, telling the Lord that he did not see how he could live without a voice, for his voice to

preach and to speak was his ministry.

"'This is no ordinary man you're operating on,' Elder Lee told the surgeon. From the blessings and the prayers, an operation a bit less radical than the doctor recommended was performed.

"There was a long period of recuperation and preparation. The voice was all but gone, but a new one took its place. A quiet, persuasive, mellow



**Elder and Sister Kimball, shortly after he was called to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles**



Elder Spencer W. Kimball, about 1950

voice, an acquired voice, an appealing voice, a voice that is loved by the Latter-day Saints.

"In the intervening time he could work. During interviews he tapped out on the typewriter answers to questions and spent his time at the office.

"Then came the test. Could he speak? Could he preach?

"He went back home for his maiden speech. He went back to *the* valley. Anyone close to him knows it is not *a* valley, it is *the* valley. There, in a conference of the St. Joseph Stake, accompanied by his beloved associate from Arizona, Elder Delbert L. Stapley, he stood at the pulpit.

"I have come back here," he said, "to be among my own people. In this valley I presided as stake president." Perhaps he thought that should he fail, here he would be among those who loved him most and would understand.

"There was a great outpouring of love. The tension of this dramatic moment was broken when he continued, 'I must tell you what has happened to me. I went away to the East, and while there I fell among cutthroats. . . .' After that it didn't matter what he said. Elder Kimball was back!" ("President Kimball: No Ordinary Man," 4).

Among his friends, he said good-bye to the past and a new voice began to be heard—no singing, but a beloved, familiar voice with a gravity of sound to match the gravity of his message.

## He Had Open-Heart Surgery [12.16]

The frailties of the flesh threatened again to stop Elder Kimball short of the calling for which he was being prepared. His heart condition resurfaced and required open-heart surgery to save him. Again President Lee pronounced blessings: life for the patient and divine guidance for the surgeon. Both blessings were fulfilled. A speedy recovery occurred; a prophet was saved. Two years later he became President of the Lord's church, demonstrating remarkably vigorous health.



Elder Kimball, soon after his heart surgery, about 1972

## He Warned Against the Love of Worldly Wealth [12.17]

**Elder Spencer W. Kimball** taught the following perspective on wealth and ownership:

"One day, a friend took me to his ranch. He unlocked the door of a large new automobile, slid under the wheel, and said proudly, 'How do you like my new car?' We rode in luxurious comfort into the rural areas to a beautiful new landscaped home, and he said with no little pride, 'This is my home.'

"He drove to a grassy knoll. The sun was retiring behind the distant hills. He surveyed his vast domain. . . .

"... We turned about to scan the distance. He identified barns, silos, the ranch house to the west. With a wide sweeping gesture, he boasted, 'From the clump of trees, to the lake, to the bluff, and to the ranch buildings and all between—all this is mine. And the dark specks in the meadow—those cattle also are mine.'

"And then I asked from whom he obtained it. The chain of title of his abstract went back to land grants from governments. His attorney had assured him he had an unencumbered title.

"'From whom did the government get it?' I asked. 'What was paid for it?'

"There came into my mind the bold statement of Paul: 'For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.' (1 Cor. 10:26.) . . .

"And then I asked, 'Did title come from God, Creator of the earth and the owner thereof? Did he get paid? Was it sold or leased or given to you? If gift, from whom? If sale, with what exchange or currency? If lease, do you make proper accounting?'

"And then I asked, 'What was the price? With what treasures did you buy this farm?'

"'Money!'

"'Where did you get the money?'

"'My toil, my sweat, my labor, and my strength.'

"And then I asked, 'Where did you get your strength to toil, your power to labor, your glands to sweat?'



Elder and Sister Kimball leaving for South America, about 1959

"He spoke of food.

" 'Where did the food originate?'

" 'From sun and atmosphere and soil and water.'

" 'And who brought those elements here?' . . .

"But my friend continued to mumble, 'Mine—mine,' as if to convince himself against the surer knowledge that he was at best a recreant renter.

"That was long years ago. I saw him lying in his death among luxurious furnishings in a palatial home. His had been a vast estate. And I folded his arms upon his breast, and drew down the little curtains over his eyes. I spoke at his funeral, and I followed the cortege from the good piece of earth he had claimed to his grave, a tiny, oblong area the length of a tall man, the width of a heavy one.

"Yesterday I saw that same estate, yellow in grain, green in lucerne, white in cotton, seemingly unmindful of him who had claimed it. Oh, puny man, see the busy ant moving the sands of the sea" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1968, 73–74).



Elder and Sister Kimball in Egypt, 1960

## The Gospel Solves Problems [12.18]

In 1971, **President Spencer W. Kimball**, then Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught that "on this earth the Lord provided everything that man might need to make him happy. . . .

"How disturbed He must be as He looks down from His heavens, having given to man his free agency, notes how unwisely he has used it; when He sees the hundreds of millions in want, the hundreds of millions barely provided for; then the numerous who roll in wealth they cannot use.



With Elder Boyd K. Packer (far left)

"Certainly it is not the intent of the Lord to reverse the process and make the rich poor and the poor rich. He would like to have a nice balance, where all will work, where all will enjoy the fruits of all the earth. . . .

"Man would limit the poor by birth control and abortion. The Gospel would limit the poor by better distribution of the wealth of the world which the Lord says is plenty, and that there is 'enough and to spare.' 'Man's ways are not always God's ways.' . . .

"The Lord Jesus Christ came not with a sword, or jail keys, or legal powers. He came not with power of arms or ammunition, but with the law of persuasion. While he preached righteousness the world fought and sinned and died in their stench. The Gospel is to *all* but it is also to *each*. The big frustrated, corrupt and dying world can be cured but the only cure for it is applying the Gospel in our lives. Human nature must be changed and controlled. . . .

"I was in Lima. A number of men of the press from the big newspapers circled me in the mission home. . . . And when most of them had made their notes and departed seemingly satisfied, one young upstart remained to question me. His questions now centered around polygamy, racism, poverty, and war. I tried to answer meaningfully and respectfully his insinuating questions. . . . He disdainfully asked why the 'Mormon' Church had not cured this world of poverty. Then I turned on him and said something like this:

"Sir! What is this you ask? Do you know where poverty is born, where it resides, where it is nourished? I have traveled over your country considerably from coastline to highest mountain tops. . . . I have seen your mountain folk barely existing on primitive fare in squalid shacks,

with limited food, with an absence from luxury. In your big city I see your mansions and palaces, but I also see your numerous homes of pasteboard, and tin cans, and store cartons and the emaciated bodies of your Indians from inland and upland. I have seen your cathedrals with altars of gold and silver and your beggars on the cold floors of such edifices, with their skinny arms extended and their bony hands cupped and raised to those who come to see or to worship. And you ask *me* about poverty. I have been through the Andes Mountains and wept for the Indians who are still persecuted and deprived and burdened and ignored. They are carrying their burdens on their backs, their commodities to market on their backs, their purchases on their backs. And when they come to your cities, I see them snubbed and ignored and unaccepted. Four hundred years you have had them. Four centuries they have been just poor deprived Indians. For many generations they have been humans merely subsisting. For four hundred years, as the Children of Israel were, they have been in veritable slavery. With their unrelenting poverty are many generations of ignorance and superstition, hunger and pestilence and convulsions of nature. And you talk to *me* of poverty and deprivation and suffering and want.



President Spencer W. Kimball  
and his wife, Camilla

“Four hundred years you have had them. Have their morals improved, their superstitions decreased, their culture richened? Have their ideals heightened? Their ambitions stirred? Their production increased? Their faith enlarged? What have you done for them? How much better off are they today, in the Andes, than when you came four centuries ago?” . . .

“He gathered up his papers and pencils.

“I deliberated:

“We have Indians, too—Indians who came from a desert hogan from near-starving conditions—and they are now, in one single generation, well-dressed, well-educated, filling missions, getting degrees and drawing coveted salaries, filling important responsibilities in community and nation” (*The Gospel Solves Problems of the World* [fireside address at Brigham Young University, Sept. 26, 1971], 2–3, 7–8).

## “When the World Will Be Converted” [12.19]

Spencer W. Kimball was set apart as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on July 7, 1972. On December 30, 1973, after the death of President Harold B. Lee, he became President of the Church, giving him the right to exercise all of the keys of Christ’s earthly kingdom.

In April 1974, in an address to regional representatives of the Church, **President Kimball** powerfully expressed his convictions about our missionary responsibilities to move forward with the Lord’s charge to “go ye therefore, and teach all nations” (Matthew 28:19):

“Did he mean all the nations then extant? . . .

“Do you think he included all the nations that would be organized up until that time? And as he commanded them to go forth, do you think he wondered if it could be done? He reassured us. He had the power. He said, ‘All power is given me in heaven and in earth . . . and I am with you always.’ . . .

“... [The] prophets visualized the numerous spirits and all the creations. It seems to me that the Lord chose his words when he said ‘every nation,’ ‘every land,’ ‘uttermost bounds of the earth,’ ‘every tongue,’ ‘every people,’ ‘every soul,’ ‘all the world,’ ‘many lands.’

“Surely there is significance in these words!

“Certainly his sheep were not limited to the thousands about him and with whom he rubbed shoulders each day. A universal family! A universal command!

“My brethren, I wonder if we are doing all we can. Are we complacent in our approach to teaching all the world? We have been proselyting now 144 years. Are we prepared to lengthen our stride? To enlarge our vision?



Dedication of the Orson Hyde Memorial Gardens in Jerusalem, Israel, 1979

“Remember, our ally is our God. He is our commander. He made the plans. He gave the commandment” (“When the World Will Be Converted,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1974, 4–5).

Israel must be gathered, the children of Lehi raised up, the kingdom of God expanded, the world warned. Little wonder that the prophet called on us to lengthen our stride, to lift our vision. President Kimball saw the outcome through the eyes of faith.



President Spencer W. Kimball

## He Called for Better-Prepared Missionaries [12.20]

**President Spencer W. Kimball** declared that every worthy and able young man should prepare to serve a mission:

“When I ask for more missionaries, I am not asking for more testimony-barren or unworthy missionaries. I am asking that we start earlier and train our missionaries better in every branch and every ward in the world. That is another challenge—that the young people will understand that it is a great privilege to go on a mission and that they must be physically well, mentally well, spiritually well, and that ‘the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance.’

“I am asking for missionaries who have been carefully indoctrinated [taught] and trained through the family and the organizations of the Church, and who come to the mission with a great desire. I am asking . . . that we train prospective missionaries much better, much earlier, much longer, so that each anticipates his mission with great joy. . . .

“The question is frequently asked: Should every young man fill a mission? And the answer has been given by the Lord. It is ‘Yes.’ Every young man should fill a mission. [See D&C 133:8; see also D&C 63:37.] . . .

“He did not limit it.

“The answer is ‘yes.’ Every man should also pay his tithing. Every man should observe the Sabbath. Every man should attend his meetings. Every man should marry in the temple and properly train his children, and do many other mighty works. Of course he should. He does not always do it.

“We realize that while all men definitely should, all men are not prepared to teach the gospel abroad. Far too many young men arrive at the missionary age quite unprepared to go on a mission, and of course they should not be sent. But they should all be prepared. There are a few physically unfit to do missionary service, but Paul also had a thorn in his side. There are far too many unfit emotionally and mentally and morally, because they have not kept their lives clean and in harmony with the spirit of missionary work. They should have been prepared. Should! But since they have broken the laws, they may have to be deprived, and thereon hangs one of our greatest challenges: to keep these young boys worthy. Yes, we would say, every able worthy man should shoulder the cross. What an army we should have teaching Christ and him crucified! Yes, they should be prepared, usually with saved funds for their missions, and always with a happy heart to serve” (“When the World Will Be Converted,” 7–8).

## “Who Gave You Your Voice?” [12.21]

**Elder Rex D. Pinegar**, who was a member of the Seventy, shared the following teaching of President Spencer W. Kimball:

“While in Argentina in 1975 at the area conference, President Kimball spoke to a large gathering of youth. Shortly after he began, he set aside his prepared text and shared a personal experience with them. He asked them, ‘Who gave you your voice?’ He then told them about his experience with surgery to save his voice. He explained that the Lord had spared his voice. He said it wasn’t the



President and Sister Kimball with their grandchildren, December 1974

same voice he had once had. He couldn't sing as he had previously enjoyed doing, but he did have a voice. He said his voice wasn't a pretty one, but I tell you it was beautiful in what it taught that night. As he spoke the youth responded even before the translator could interpret his words. He told those present, 'Serving a mission is like paying tithing; you're not compelled—you do it because it's right. We want to go on missions because it's the Lord's way. The Savior didn't say, "If it's convenient, go," he said, "Go ye into all the world.'" (Mark 16:15.) President Kimball explained that it was a responsibility of young women to help young men remain worthy and to encourage them to go on missions.

"As the President concluded his remarks he asked, 'Didn't the Lord give you your voice so you could teach the gospel?' He then testified that he had come to know that his voice and our voices are for the declaring of the gospel of Jesus Christ and for testifying of the truths revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith. President Kimball teaches us the correct perspective of life" ("The Living Prophet," *Ensign*, Nov. 1976, 67).

## He Explained the Greatest Reason for Missionary Work [12.22]

**President Spencer W. Kimball's** love of missionary work was readily apparent. He spoke of the work often: "If there were no converts, the Church would shrivel and die on the vine. But perhaps the greatest reason for missionary work is to give the world its chance to hear and accept the gospel. The scriptures are replete with commands and promises and calls and rewards for teaching the gospel. I use the word *command* deliberately for it seems to be an insistent directive from which we, singly and collectively, cannot escape" ("When the World Will Be Converted," 4).



The First Presidency: N. Eldon Tanner, Spencer W. Kimball, and Marion G. Romney, 1980

## We Should Meet Our Worldwide Missionary Obligation [12.23]

**President Spencer W. Kimball** said:

"The immensity of the work before us is emphasized as we consider the population of the world as it approaches the four billion mark.



A time for pondering, 1981

"I am under no delusion, brethren, to think that this will be an easy matter without strain or that it can be done overnight, but I do have this faith that we can move forward and expand much faster than we now are. . . .

"When we have increased the missionaries from the organized areas of the Church to a number close to their potential, that is, every able and worthy boy in the Church on a mission; when every stake and mission abroad is furnishing enough missionaries for

that country; when we have used our qualified men to help the apostles to open these new fields of labor; when we have used the satellite and related discoveries to their greatest potential and all of the media—the papers, magazines, television, radio—all in their greatest power; when we have organized numerous other stakes which will be springboards; when we have recovered from inactivity the numerous young men who are now unordained and unmissioned and unmarried; then, and not until then, shall we approach the insistence of our Lord and Master to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" ("When the World Will Be Converted," 13–14).

## The Gospel Shall Be Victorious [12.24]

**President Spencer W. Kimball** said:

"If we do all we can, and I accept my own part of that responsibility, I am sure the Lord will bring more discoveries to our use. He will bring a change of heart into kings and magistrates and emperors, or he will divert rivers or open seas or find ways to touch hearts. He will open the gates and make possible the proselyting. Of that, I have great faith.

"Now, we have the promise from the Lord that the evil one will never be able to frustrate totally the work that He has commanded us to do.

"This kingdom will continue to increase and to grow, to spread and to prosper more and more. Every time its enemies undertake to overthrow it, it will become more extensive and powerful; instead of decreasing it will continue to increase; it will spread the more, become more wonderful and conspicuous to the nations, until it fills the whole earth.' (President Brigham Young, April conference, 1852.)" ("When the World Will Be Converted," 13).

## He Taught about the Miracle of Forgiveness [12.25]

President Kimball taught extensively the principle of repentance. His teachings have positively influenced many. **Elder Boyd K. Packer** recognized this great influence and wrote the following: "President Kimball himself is an experienced surgeon of sorts. Not a doctor of medicine, but a doctor of spiritual well-being. Many a moral cancer has been excised, many a blemish of character has been removed, many a spiritual illness of one kind or another has been cured through his efforts. Some on the verge of spiritual oblivion have been rescued by him. He has written a book—literally years in preparation—*The Miracle of Forgiveness*. Many have been protected by the counsel he has written. Countless others have been inspired to set their lives in order and have experienced that miracle" ("President Kimball: No Ordinary Man," 5).

## He Taught about True Repentance [12.26]

**President Kimball** explained:

"Sometimes it is easier to define what something *is* by telling what it is *not*.

"Repentance is *not* repetition of sin. It is *not* laughing at sin. It is *not* justification for sin. Repentance is *not* the hardening of the spiritual arteries. It is *not* the minimizing of the seriousness of the error. Repentance is *not* retirement from activity. It is *not* the closeting of sin to corrode and overburden the sinner. . . .

"True repentance is composed of many elements, each one related to the others.

"**President Joseph F. Smith** covered the matter well:

"True repentance is not only sorrow for sins and humble penitence and contrition before God, but it involves the necessity of turning away from them, a discontinuance of

all evil practices and deeds, a thorough reformation of life, a vital change from evil to good, from vice to virtue, from darkness to light. Not only so, but to make restitution so far as is possible for all the wrongs that we have done, to pay our debts and restore to God and man their rights, that which is due them from us. This is true repentance and the exercise of the will and all the powers of body and mind is demanded to complete this glorious work of repentance.'

"True repentance must come to each individual. It cannot be accomplished by proxy. One can neither buy nor borrow nor traffic in it. There is no royal road to repentance: whether he be a president's son or a king's daughter, an emperor's prince or a lowly peasant, he must himself repent and his repentance must be personal and individual and humble.

"Whether he be lean or fat, handsome or ugly, tall or short, intellectual or less trained, he must change his own life in a real and humble repentance.

"There must be a consciousness of guilt. It cannot be brushed aside. It must be acknowledged and not rationalized away. It must be given its full importance. If it is 10,000 talents, it must not be rated at 100 pence; if it is a mile long, it must not be rated a rod or a yard; if it is a ton transgression, it must not be rated a pound. . . .

"True repentance is to forgive all others. One cannot be forgiven so long as he holds grudges against others. He must be 'merciful unto [his] brethren; deal justly, judge righteously, and do good continually. . . .' (Al. 41:14.)

"There must be an abandonment of the transgression. It must be genuine and consistent and continuing. The Lord



The First Presidency: N. Eldon Tanner, Marion G. Romney, Gordon B. Hinckley, and Spencer W. Kimball, 1982

said in 1832: ‘... go your ways and sin no more; but unto that soul who sinneth shall the former sins return, saith the Lord your God.’ (D&C 82:7.)

“And a temporary, momentary change of life is not sufficient. . . .

“The true confession is not only a matter of making known certain developments but it is a matter of getting peace, which seemingly can come in no other way.

“Frequently people talk about time: How long before they can be forgiven? How soon may they go to the temple?

“Repentance is timeless. The evidence of repentance is transformation. We certainly must keep our values straight and our evaluations intact.

“Certainly we must realize that penalties for sin are not a sadistic desire on the part of the Lord, and that is why when people get deep in immorality or other comparable sins, there must be action by courts with proper jurisdiction. Many people cannot repent until they have suffered much. They cannot direct their thoughts into new clean channels. They cannot control their acts. They cannot plan their future properly until they have lost values that they did not seem to fully appreciate. Therefore, the Lord has prescribed excommunication, disfellowshipment, or probation, and this is in line with Alma’s statement that there could be no repentance without suffering, and many people cannot suffer, having not come to a realization of their sin and a consciousness of their guilt.

“One form of punishment is deprivation, and so if one is not permitted to partake of the sacrament or to use his priesthood or to go to the temple or to preach or pray in any of the meetings, it constitutes a degree of embarrassment and deprivation and punishment. In fact, the principal punishment that the Church can deal is deprivation from privileges. . . .

“True repentance must include restitution. There are sins for which restitution can be made, such as a theft, but then there are other sins that cannot yield to restitution, such as murder or adultery or incest. One of the requisites for repentance is the living of the commandments of the Lord. Perhaps few people realize that as an important element; though one may have abandoned a particular sin and even confessed it to his bishop, yet he is not



With his counselor President Gordon B. Hinckley (far right)

repentant if he has not developed a life of action and service and righteousness, which the Lord has indicated to be very necessary: ‘... He that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven’ ” (“What Is True Repentance,” *New Era*, May 1974, 4–5, 7).

## “Every Faithful, Worthy Man in the Church May Receive the Holy Priesthood” [12.27]

“Perhaps few events have had a greater impact on the worldwide spread of the gospel than did the 1978 revelation received through President Spencer W. Kimball extending the priesthood to worthy males of all races. For some time, the General Authorities had discussed this topic at length in their regular temple meetings. In addition, President Kimball went frequently to the temple, especially on Saturdays and Sundays when he could be there alone, to plead for guidance. ‘I wanted to be sure,’ he explained [see “‘News’ Interviews Prophet,” *Church News*, Jan. 6, 1979, 4].

“On June 1, 1978, President Kimball met with his counselors and the Twelve and again brought up the possibility of conferring the priesthood upon worthy brethren of all races. He expressed the hope that there might be a clear answer received one way or the other. **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** of the Quorum of the Twelve recalled, ‘At this point President Kimball asked the brethren if any of them desired to express their feelings and views as to the matter in hand. We all did so, freely and fluently and at considerable length, each person stating his views and manifesting the feelings of his heart. There was a marvelous outpouring of unity, oneness, and agreement in the council’ [Bruce R. McConkie, “The New Revelation on Priesthood,” *Priesthood* (1981), 27].



With his counselor President Gordon B. Hinckley



Nigerians entering the waters of baptism with Elder Ted Cannon

"After a two-hour discussion, President Kimball asked the group to unite in formal prayer and modestly suggested that he act as voice. He recalled:

"I told the Lord if it wasn't right, if He didn't want this change to come in the Church that I would be true to it all the rest of my life, and I'd fight the world against it if that's what He wanted.

"... But this revelation and assurance came to me so clearly that there was no question about it' ["'News' Interviews Prophet," 4].

"**President Gordon B. Hinckley** was at the historic meeting. He remembered: 'There was a hallowed and sanctified atmosphere in the room. For me, it felt as if a conduit opened between the heavenly throne and the kneeling, pleading prophet of God who was joined by his Brethren. . . .

"Every man in that circle, by the power of the Holy Ghost, knew the same thing. . . .

"... Not one of us who was present on that occasion was ever quite the same after that. Nor has the Church been quite the same. . . .

"Tremendous, eternal consequences for millions over the earth are flowing from that manifestation. . . .

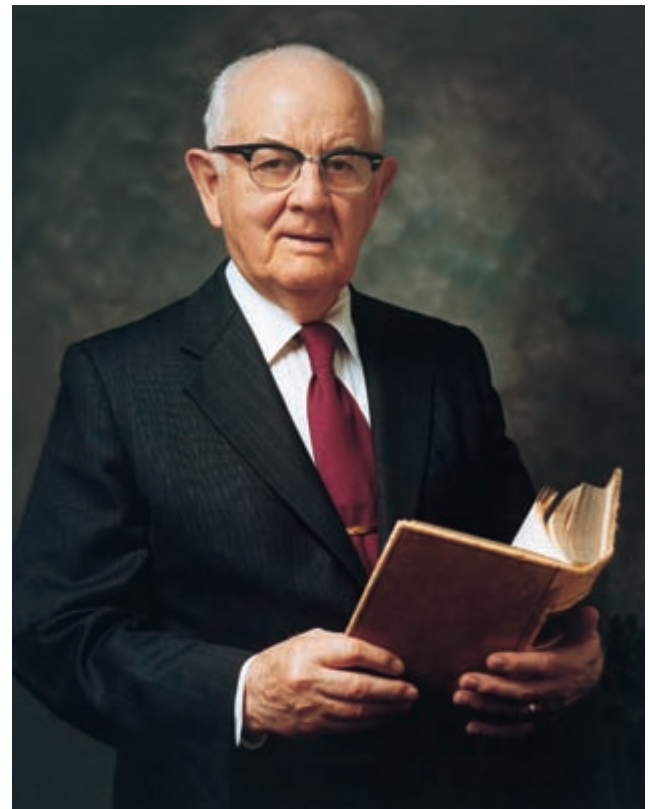
"... This has opened great areas of the world to the teaching of the everlasting gospel. This has made it possible that 'every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world.'

"We have cause to rejoice and to praise the God of our salvation that we have seen this glorious day' ["Priesthood Restoration," *Ensign*, Oct. 1988, 70–71]" (*Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 2nd ed. [2003], 584).

## The Church Mourned the Passing of a Giant [12.28]

President Spencer W. Kimball died on November 5, 1985. Under his leadership the members of the Church accepted the challenge to "lengthen their stride" by increasing their efforts in missionary work, temple building, and all aspects of the gospel. He had served for 30 as an Apostle before becoming President of the Church. Those who worked with him could barely match his pace and admired him for his many abilities. He set high standards for himself and for the Church. His declaration to "Do it" motivated everyone to do their best and not procrastinate away time that could be used to build the kingdom of the Lord.

His life was a testimony to his counsel, "Remember that those who climb to high places did not always have it easy" ("The Davids and the Goliaths," *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, 80).



President Spencer W. Kimball



# Ezra Taft Benson

## Thirteenth President of the Church

13

### Highlights in the Life of Ezra Taft Benson

Age	Events
	He was born August 4, 1899, in Whitney, Franklin County, Idaho, to George T. and Sarah Dunkley Benson.
12	His father left to serve in the Northern States Mission (Apr. 8, 1912).
15	He began attending Oneida Stake Academy, Preston, Idaho (1914).
19	He attended Utah State Agricultural College (fall, 1918).
21–23	He served in the British Mission (July 14, 1921–23).
26	He graduated from BYU with a degree in animal husbandry and agronomy (spring, 1926).
27	He married Flora Smith Amussen (Sept. 10, 1926); he graduated from Iowa State College with a master's degree in agricultural economics (June 13, 1927).
29	He became a University of Idaho Extension Service agent (Mar. 4, 1929).
36	He received a fellowship award and moved to Berkeley, California, where he began graduate studies (Aug. 1, 1936).
39	He was set apart by Elder Melvin J. Ballard as president of the Boise Stake (Nov. 27, 1938); he began serving as executive secretary of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives in Washington, D.C. (Apr. 15, 1939).
40	He was set apart as president of the Washington D.C. Stake (June 30, 1940).
44	He was ordained an Apostle by President Heber J. Grant (Oct. 7, 1943).
46–47	He reopened missionary work and supervised the distribution of welfare supplies in war-torn Europe; he served as president of the European Mission (Dec. 22, 1945–Dec. 22, 1946).
49	He was elected a member of the National Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America, succeeding President George Albert Smith (May 23, 1949).
53	He was sworn in as the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture (Jan. 20, 1953).
64	He was called by President David O. McKay to serve as president of the European Mission (Oct. 18, 1963).
74	He became President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (Dec. 30, 1973).
78	He received the George Washington Medal Award from the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania (May 2, 1978).
86	He became President of the Church (Nov. 10, 1985).
87	Stake seventies quorums were discontinued (Oct. 4, 1986).
88	He dedicated the Frankfurt Germany Temple (Aug. 28, 1987).
89	The Second Quorum of the Seventy was organized (Apr. 1, 1989); he received the Bronze Wolf, the highest award given by world Scouting (Apr. 1, 1989).
90	He received the Presidential Citizens Medal from U.S. President George H. W. Bush, naming him “one of the most distinguished Americans of his time” (Aug. 1989); he participated in the dedication of the Portland Oregon Temple (Aug. 19, 1989).
91	Twenty-nine missions were created (1990).
93	His beloved wife, Flora, died (Aug. 14, 1992).
94	He died in Salt Lake City, Utah (May 30, 1994).

## He Let the Lord Make up the Difference

[13.1]

"In the mid-fifties a young man working in Washington, D.C., became acquainted with Ezra Taft Benson, then secretary of Agriculture. After observing the Secretary function in his demanding, often controversial, post while trying to retain the dignity and deportment of an apostle, the man asked Elder Benson how he managed to handle everything. Elder Benson replied, in words to this effect, 'I work as hard as I can and do everything within my power. And I try to keep the commandments. Then I let the Lord make up the difference.' There, in a nutshell, lies the formula to President Benson's life and to his success" (Sheri L. Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson: A Biography* [1987], vii–viii).

## His Great-Grandfather Was an Apostle [13.2]

Ezra Taft Benson was named after his great-grandfather, whom Brigham Young called to be an Apostle during the exodus to the Salt Lake Valley. He was the first Apostle called after the death of the prophet Joseph Smith. "It was on the trail that Ezra T. was called to the Quorum of the Twelve. . . . President Young instructed Ezra, in part, 'If you accept this office, I want you to come immediately to Council Bluffs, to prepare to go to the Rocky Mountains.'



Ezra T. Benson (1811–69), great-grandfather of Ezra Taft Benson

Ezra Benson, at age 35, was ordained an apostle on July 16, 1846, by President Young and promised that he should yet have 'the strength of Samson.'

Nearly a year later, he was in the first company of pioneers that entered the Salt Lake Valley on July 24, 1847. He spoke in the first sacrament meeting held there, and then headed back across the trail to inform other companies en route that a place of settlement had been located.

"During subsequent years Ezra would serve a number of missions, Europe and Hawaii among them, travel in and out of Salt Lake City, and play a key role in colonizing the Great Basin, particularly Tooele, Utah, where he milled lumber, and later, Cache Valley [in Idaho]" (Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson*, 6–7).

## A Prophet Was Born [13.3]

"On October 19, 1898, Sarah [Sophia Dunkley] and George [Taft Benson Jr.] were married in the Logan Temple. The small home they had built and furnished themselves [a mile and a half northeast of Whitney, Idaho,] was ready for occupancy. While not elaborate, it was adequate for a young couple in love. . . .



George T., Ezra Taft Benson's father

"George thrived on working in the soil and living by the law of the harvest—that you can only reap what you sow. . . . He was a man of sterling character who felt that no one owed him a living and whose ambition was to help his children help themselves. His wife had qualities to match, particularly when it came to rearing children.

"When Sarah learned they were to be blessed

with their first child, she and George were ecstatic. They prayed and planned together about their family, and eagerly awaited the baby's arrival.

"On August 4, 1899, as Sarah's labor began, George administered to her. Dr. Allen Cutler attended her in the bedroom of their farm home, with both grandmothers, Louisa Benson and Margaret Dunkley, there. The delivery was protracted. As the baby, a large boy, was delivered, the doctor couldn't get him to breathe and quickly laid him on the bed and pronounced, 'There's no hope for the child, but I believe we can save the mother.' While Dr. Cutler feverishly attended to Sarah, the grandmothers rushed to the kitchen, praying silently as they worked, and returned shortly with two pans of water—one cold, the other warm. Alternately, they dipped the baby first in cold and then in warm water, until finally they heard a cry. The 11 3/4 pound boy was alive! Later both grandmothers bore testimony that the Lord had spared the child. George and Sarah named him Ezra Taft Benson.



Ezra Taft Benson at three months old

"From the time he could walk, 'T.', as young Ezra was nicknamed, was his father's shadow—riding horses, working in the fields, hitching up the horse and buggy for meetings, playing ball and swimming in the creek. He had a rich sense of heritage, stemming from his birth-right as Ezra T. Benson's eldest great-grandson, but also because he idolized his father and, as a young boy, felt an unusual sense of security and deep pride in who he was. Years later, after George Benson died, his eldest son overheard one of the few non-Mormons in Whitney say, 'Today we buried the greatest influence for good in Cache Valley.' Without question, George Benson was a powerful influence in the life of his eldest son" (Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson*, 12–14).



Sarah Benson and her children, near the time her husband was called on a mission, 1912. Ezra Taft Benson is 14 years old and the tallest of the children.

## He Was Raised in a Wonderful Family [13.4]

The Benson home had a warm, enjoyable atmosphere. The children felt that their family was ideal, and their parents adored each other. The farm was a place of hard work and all the family shared the chores. Cultivating potatoes, herding cattle, expanding their home, fixing machinery, and planting sugar beets were some of the tasks that filled their days.

The children learned to work at an early age. Ezra Taft Benson "was only four years of age when he drove a wagon team for the first time, but as he grew up on the farm, his chores went to every phase of agricultural life. He learned the meaning of work and loved it. As one evidence of his industry, when only 16 years of age he single-handedly thinned an entire acre of sugar beets in only one day. He was paid \$12 for the work.

"Even with his busy life at work and in school, he always found time to engage in sports, basketball and baseball being his favorites. He played basketball as a boy with President Harold B. Lee, who also grew up in Idaho. They were boyhood friends.

"He attended the Oneida Stake Academy at Preston, Idaho, and traveled from his home to school by horse-back or buggy in warm weather and by sleigh in winter" (Mark E. Petersen, "Ezra Taft Benson: 'A Habit of Integrity,'" *Ensign*, Oct. 1974, 23).

"George Benson was by nature a happy man. First thing in the morning he shouted, 'Let a little sunshine in. Clear the darkened windows, open wide the door, let a little sunshine in.' If the season was warm, he would open the front door, then call his children—'Ezra, Joe, Margaret, time to get chores done'—and shake the stove vigorously. The boys' room was directly upstairs, and that was the sign they had better get up. . . .

"Most Saturdays were half-holidays. Around one in the afternoon, the work stopped, and the family joined in everything from horse and foot races to baseball games and small rodeos, where the boys tried to ride calves. Swimming, hiking, and picnicking were favorite activities. It was said that Sarah could pack the finest picnic basket in the valley. The Bensons had the first phonograph in the area, and the boys had a basketball court with backboards at both ends and a dirt playing surface that George rolled until it was smooth and packed solid. The Benson farm was a gathering place for young people" (Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson*, 21–22).

## His Father Was Called on a Mission [13.5]

"In this childhood setting—one he later called 'ideal'—Ezra Taft Benson learned how to sacrifice to reap a spiritual harvest. He was just twelve when his father, George Benson, was called to serve an eighteen-month mission in the midwestern United States. There were seven children in the Benson home when their father left for the mission field, with the eighth soon to be born. And Ezra, as the oldest son, had to carry much of the responsibility for the farm. One of President Benson's most vivid memories of his father's absence was of gathering around the kitchen table to hear his mother read her husband's weekly letters. 'There came into that home a spirit of missionary work that never left,' recalled President Benson. All eleven Benson children later served missions" ("President Ezra Taft Benson: A Sure Voice of Faith," *Ensign*, July 1994, 10).



George T. Benson (far right) and his seven sons. Ezra is next to his father.

## He Learned Much from His Early School Experiences [13.6]

Ezra Taft Benson attended the Oneida Stake Academy in Preston, Idaho. It was a Church-sponsored school where morning devotional and prayer began each day's activities. It was there he first met Harold B. Lee, who was a year ahead of him in school. They became good friends and both sang in the school's first choir. Ezra's interests were mainly in the areas of agriculture and vocational training. He believed that a man should be able to fix anything.

He shared the following experience he had in high school:

"I rode horseback three miles each way to get to high school and in bad weather it was a problem sometimes to make my eight o'clock class on time. Like others, I often missed school to help on the farm, especially in the fall, until after harvest, and in the spring, during planting season.

"The one man other than my father who made the most lasting impression was an uncle, Serge B. Benson. He taught me in three different classes—but above all, he taught me lessons in moral, physical, and intellectual courage that I have tried to apply in later life. He reinforced my parents' emphasis on honesty, on standing by the truth at all costs.

"Sometimes the cost came high.

"One day in the middle of an important examination in high school, the point of my lead pencil broke. In those days, we used pocket knives to sharpen our pencils. I had forgotten my penknife, and turned to ask a neighbor for his. The teacher saw this; he accused me of cheating.

When I tried to explain, he gave me a tongue-lashing for lying; worse, he forbade me to play on the basketball team in the upcoming big game.

"I could see that the more I protested the angrier he seemed to become. But, again and again, I stubbornly told what had happened. Even when the coach pleaded my cause, the teacher refused to budge. The disgrace was almost more than I could bear. Then, just minutes before the game, he had a change of heart, and I was permitted to play. But there was no joy in it. We lost the game; and though that hurt, by far the deeper pain was being branded a cheat and a liar.

"Looking back, I know that lesson was God-sent. Character is shaped in just such crucibles.

"My parents believed me; they were understanding and encouraging. Supported by them, Uncle Serge's lessons in courage, and a clear conscience, I began to realize that when you are at peace with your Maker you can, if not ignore human criticism, at least rise above it.

"And I learned something else—the importance of avoiding even the appearance of evil. Though I was innocent, circumstance made me look guilty. Since this could so easily be true in many of life's situations, I made a resolution to keep even the appearance of my actions above question, as far as possible. And it struck me, too, that if this injustice happened to me, it could happen to others, and I must not judge their actions simply on appearances" (*Cross Fire: The Eight Years with Eisenhower* [1962], 17).



Ezra Taft Benson (sitting), age 18, and his brother Orval, age 14

## He Enjoyed Playing Basketball [13.7]

Ezra Taft Benson enjoyed sports, especially basketball. His father loved the game and supported his sons whenever they competed. George Benson encouraged all seven of his sons to play basketball. He issued a challenge through the *Franklin County Citizen* that his family would take on any other family in basketball. Ezra felt that they were probably fortunate that they did not have any other family take up the challenge (see Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson*, 38).

## Scouting Became a Lifelong Love [13.8]

Ezra Taft Benson was a lifelong supporter of Scouting. He received the three highest national awards in Scouting—the Silver Beaver, the Silver Antelope, and the Silver Buffalo—as well as world Scouting’s international award, the Bronze Wolf.



Ezra Taft Benson was a life-long scouter. Here is President Benson at a National Scout Jamboree in Moraine Park, Pennsylvania, 1977.

“Ezra had a desire to be ‘a leader of boys,’ and in 1918 he got his first formal opportunity when Bishop Benson called his grandson, Ezra, as assistant Scoutmaster to twenty-four lively, mischievous Scouts. (He later became Scoutmaster.) Ezra took to the assignment like a veteran. In those days the YMMIA sponsored choruses for the teenage boys, and the Scoutmaster was expected to get them to practice. The choirs sang not only for pleasure and entertainment but also in competitions. After weeks of practice and pushing and prodding on Ezra’s part, his choir won first place in the Franklin Stake competition, which qualified them to compete in the Logan Tabernacle against six other winning groups. This was a big event for the boys, some of whom had never been as far from home as Logan.

“To motivate his troop, Ezra promised them—‘in a moment of anxiety or weakness,’ he wasn’t sure which—that if they won the regional competition, he would lead them on a thirty-five-mile hike across the mountains to Bear Lake.

“On the night of the competition each choir drew lots for placement. The Whitney chorus drew last place, which prolonged their anxiety. When they were finally announced, twenty-four boys marched up the aisle and on stage while the pianist played ‘Stars and Stripes Forever.’ Ezra crouched between two benches to direct their performance. ‘They sang as I’d never heard them

sing, and of course I’d not tell the story had we not won first place in Logan,’ he said.

“A promise made is a debt unpaid, and the Scouts had barely been declared the winners when they gathered around their Scoutmaster to remind him of the hike. At a subsequent prehike planning session, one twelve-year-old Scout excitedly suggested, ‘Mr. Scoutmaster, I’d like to make a motion. We should all clip our hair off so we will not be bothered with combs and brushes on the trip.’ The older Scouts squirmed (crewcuts, they thought, would not attract young women), but the motion carried—not, however, before one of the older Scouts said, ‘How about the Scoutmasters?’ It was Ezra’s turn to squirm.

“The following Saturday Ezra took his place in the barber’s chair, with twenty-four Scouts looking on. As the barber neared the end of Ezra’s haircut, he said, ‘If you’ll let me shave your head, I’ll cut the hair of the rest of your boys for nothing.’ Two days later, twenty-four Scouts and one bald Scoutmaster, with his bald assistants, set out for Bear Lake. The ten-day hike was ‘glorious nevertheless,’ filled with fishing, camping, hiking, swimming, and camaraderie. ‘One of the joys of working with boys is that you get your pay as you go along,’ Ezra later explained. ‘You can observe the results of your leadership daily. . . . Such satisfaction cannot be purchased at any price; it must be earned.’ [See Ezra Taft Benson, “Scouting Builds Men,” *New Era*, Feb. 1975, 14–18.]” (Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson*, 42–44).

## He Was Called as a Missionary to England [13.9]

In the early 1850s when many of the Saints were moving to the Great Salt Lake Basin, the missionaries in Great Britain were enjoying great success. Church membership in Great Britain was then double that in the United States. Many of the British converts eventually migrated to America and settled in the western frontier. By the early 1900s, however, anti-Mormons had created a hostile environment that made missionary work difficult in Great Britain. Motion pictures and publications of the time depicted Mormons as deceptive and immoral.

In 1921, Ezra Taft Benson was called to serve a mission in England. In 1922, Elder David O.



A missionary to the British Isles, 1921–23



Missionaries to the British Isles. Elder Ezra Taft Benson is seated on the far right, next to his mission president, David O. McKay, and Sister McKay, 1922.

McKay, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, was called as the mission president and found England flooded with the vilest slander against the Church. It was in this atmosphere that Elder Benson served.

"A series of one-liners in his journal indicates the challenges [Elder Benson faced]: 'Cussed by a little 18 yr. old maid . . . tracting among the rich—enjoyed it in spite of their bitterness'; 'detectives on our trail at present'; 'two ministers watching us tract. ha! Rain and snow.' Maids in some wealthy homes usually answered the door, and some subsequently accused the missionaries of trying to lure them away. An anti-Mormon lecture, 'Inside of Mormonism,' was held one evening while the Saints were holding an MIA meeting. 'Town in uproar about Mormons. All of vast assembly voted to have us put out of town,' Ezra wrote on March 30, 1922. He penned a rebuttal for the *Cumberland News* denouncing lies published about Mormonism.

"Despite the rejections, Ezra kept his sense of humor ('Went tracting, was kicked out twice is all') and perspective ('Kids yelling Mormons! as we go down to church, but thank the Lord I'm one'). But conditions continued

to intensify to the point where the missionaries even called on the police for protection. In April 1922, while trying to rent a hall for a meeting, Ezra lamented, 'Searched in vain for a hall but no success. The world seems to be against the work of the Lord.'

"Opposition notwithstanding, some good came of the anti-Mormon tirades. The *Millennial Star*, reporting on a meeting held in Grimsby on March 31, 1922, noted, 'It was the unanimous opinion that more good than harm was resulting. All the meetings are better attended than they have been for years past and many new friends are being made'" (Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson*, 58).

### He Married Flora Amussen, His Lifelong Companion [13.10]

Ezra Taft Benson married Flora Smith Amussen on September 10, 1926, in the Salt Lake Temple. She was the daughter of a Danish pioneer who immigrated from Denmark. Her father was a jeweler and watchmaker. Some of Ezra's friends felt he had no chance of dating her. He "recalled that he was spending a weekend with his friends in Logan, Utah, when he first saw his future



Flora Amussen Benson

bride. 'We were out near the dairy barns when a young woman—very attractive—drove by in her little car on her way to the dairy to get some milk,' he remembered. 'As the boys waved at her, she waved back. I said, "Who is that girl?" They said, "That's Flora Amussen." I told them, "You know, I've just had the impression I'm going to marry her."' "

"His friends laughed and told him, 'She's too popular for a farm boy.' Young Ezra simply said, 'That makes it all the more interesting.'

"After a 'wonderful courtship,' he was called on a mission to Great Britain. Flora had graduated from Brigham Young College (which offered a high school curriculum from 1909 until it closed in 1926) and would be attending Utah State Agricultural College (now Utah State University).

"'When I came back, we resumed our courting,' President Benson related. 'Then to my great surprise, Flora received a mission call to go to the Hawaiian Islands. I was really pleased to see her have this opportunity to go. She saw it as an opportunity for me to graduate from college.'

"Brother Benson graduated from Brigham Young University in 1926, the same year Sister Benson completed her mission. They married when she returned, and the couple moved to Ames, Iowa, where President Benson had been granted a seventy-dollar-a-month scholarship to study agriculture at Iowa State College (now Iowa State University).

"After Brother Benson finished his graduate studies and received his master's degree in 1929, the Bensons moved to an eighty-acre farm near Whitney, Idaho. Brother Benson became a county agricultural agent, an Extension Service economist, and a marketing specialist for the University of Idaho" ("President and Sister Benson Celebrate 60th Wedding Anniversary," *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 99).



Graduation from Brigham Young University, 1926

## He Wanted to Help Farmers [13.11]

"Ezra Taft [Benson] returned to Whitney[, Idaho,] with a master's degree and an eagerness to help other farmers improve their crops. He was so helpful, in fact, that his neighbors drafted him as county agricultural extension agent.

"For the next fifteen years, his work in agriculture and his Church service increased in scope and influence. At thirty-one, he went to Boise, where he was agricultural economist and marketing specialist for the University of Idaho and where he founded a farmers' cooperative council. In Boise he also served as stake MIA superintendent, counselor in a stake presidency, and stake president. At thirty-nine, he was offered a position in Washington, D.C., as executive secretary of a national organization representing more than two million farmers and forty-six hundred cooperative farming groups. He accepted the job only after he was assured that he would not have to lobby at cocktail parties or compromise his standards in any way. By age forty, he was serving as stake president for the second time—this time of the newly formed Washington (D.C.) Stake" ("President Benson: Voice of Faith," 12–13).

When he worked as an agricultural economist and marketing specialist for the University of Idaho, "he observed situations that didn't make sense—farmers who raised grain yet scrimped to buy high-priced puffed wheat in a box; who bought the fruit the family ate rather than raising fruit on idle acres; who left valuable equipment outside to rust in winter without taking preventive measures. He cried with men whose homesteads had been in their families for decades and who knew nothing other than tilling the soil, but who couldn't afford to stay on the farm.

"After his first tour of the state, Ezra came to appreciate more fully the Prophet Joseph Smith's counsel to the Latter-day Saints that men should be taught correct principles and then allowed to govern themselves. 'I had a firm philosophy,' Ezra said. 'You cannot help people permanently by doing for them what they can and should do for themselves. I had to help the people stand on their own feet' " (Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson*, 107).



Ezra Taft Benson with his children, Boise, Idaho, late 1930s

## He Was Called to the Apostleship [13.12]

"On July 26, 1943, Ezra Taft Benson's true vocation of serving in the kingdom became his full-time occupation when President Heber J. Grant called him to be the youngest member of the Quorum of the Twelve. He was set apart on October 7 of that year, the same day as Elder Spencer W. Kimball, whom he would follow as President [of the Church]" ("President Benson: Voice of Faith," 14).

On July 26, Ezra received a phone call asking him to meet with President Grant "at his summer home in a nearby canyon. . . .

". . . Ezra was immediately shown into President Grant's bedroom, where the aged prophet was resting. At the President's bidding, Ezra closed the door and approached him, sitting down on a chair next to the bed. President Grant took Ezra's right hand in both of his and, with tears filling his eyes, said simply, 'Brother Benson, with all my heart I congratulate you and pray God's blessing to attend you. You have been chosen as the youngest member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.'

"The shock registered in Ezra's face. He felt as if the earth were sinking from beneath him. He had had no premonition of the calling. Later he recorded his feelings: 'The announcement seemed unbelievable and overwhelming. . . . For several minutes [I] could say only, "Oh, President Grant, that can't be!" which I must have repeated several times before I was able to collect my [thoughts] enough to realize what

had happened. . . . He held my hand for a long time as we both shed tears. . . . For over an hour we were alone together, much of the time with our hands clasped warmly together. [Though he was] feeble, his mind was clear and alert, and I was deeply impressed with his sweet, kindly, humble spirit as he seemed to look into my soul.

"I felt so utterly weak and unworthy that his words of comfort and reassurance which followed were doubly appreciated. Among other things he stated, "The Lord has a way of magnifying men who are called to positions of leadership." When in my weakness I was able to state that I loved the Church he said, "We know that, and the



Elders Spencer W. Kimball and Ezra Taft Benson were both sustained to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in October 1943.

Lord wants men who will give everything for His work."

"'He told of the action taken in a special meeting of the First Presidency and the Twelve two weeks before and that the discussion regarding me had been enthusiastically unanimous. . . . I feel confident that only [through] the rich blessings of the Almighty can this ever be realized.'

"The President asked Ezra to attend general conference in October, when he would be sustained and ordained. He also told him that his grandfather and other faithful progenitors were rejoicing at this appointment of a descendant to the apostleship" (Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson*, 174–75).



Elder Ezra Taft Benson

## He Went on a Mission to Help the Suffering Saints of Europe [13.13]

"In December 1945, Elder Benson was assigned to preside over the European Mission in the aftermath of World War II. Specifically, his commission was to reopen missions throughout Europe and to distribute food, clothing, and bedding to the suffering Saints.

"On an almost eleven-month mission of love, Elder Benson traveled more than sixty thousand miles to Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Scandinavia—often in freezing weather in unheated trains and planes. With typical optimism, he organized the 'K-Ration Quartet' with his traveling companions, to sing away the tedious and uncomfortable hours.

"Time and time again, when permission to enter war-torn countries or to distribute supplies seemed impossible to obtain, Elder Benson appealed to the Lord to open the way. Barrier after barrier was dissolved, and thousands of tons of Church welfare supplies were sent to the Saints in Europe. During this mission, Elder Benson also dedicated Finland for the preaching of the gospel.

"Elder Benson met in bombed-out schoolhouses and meetinghouses with Saints who had lost homes, families, health—everything except their devotion to the gospel. The scenes of starvation and destruction never faded from President Benson's memory. Nor did the faces and the faith of his beloved European brothers and sisters, of

whom he often spoke throughout his life. Eighteen years later, Elder Benson again presided over the European missions, this time with headquarters in Frankfurt, Germany. He always took special joy in seeing stakes, missions, and temples established in Europe" ("President Benson: Voice of Faith," 14).

In August 1946 "Elder Benson learned that Elder Alma Sonne, an Assistant to the Twelve, had been called to succeed him in Europe. The news was unexpected. He had planned to be in Europe for another six months and believed there was much left to do. But he was delighted to be going home. In a moment of rare reflection, he admitted that the previous months had been 'a bit rough and rugged, but the Lord has sustained me in a most remarkable way.'

"But because word of the change came so suddenly, **Elder Benson** wondered if his performance had been acceptable. Then an unusual experience allayed his fears, and he recorded it in his journal: 'Last night, in a dream, I was privileged to spend, what seemed about an hour, with Pres. George Albert Smith in Salt Lake. It was a most impressive and soul-satisfying experience. We talked intimately together about the Great Work in which we are engaged and about my devoted family. I felt the warmth of his embrace as we both shed tears of gratitude for the rich blessings of the Lord. . . . The last day or so I have been wondering if my labors in Europe have been acceptable to the First [Presidency] and the Brethren at home and especially to my Heavenly Father. This sweet

experience has tended to put my mind completely at ease, for which I am deeply grateful.'

"Shortly thereafter **Elder Harold B. Lee** wrote Ezra, 'The brethren are united in the feeling that you have performed a glorious mission and a work that could hardly have been accomplished by one of lesser courage and ability . . . and with undaunted faith in the power of the Lord to overcome obstacles'" (Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson*, 224).



**Elder Benson and Max Zimmer in the warehouse of the International Red Cross at Geneva, Switzerland, inspecting supplies to be sent to the Saints in Europe, 1946**



**Elder Benson and a group of Saints in Poland, 1946**

## He Was United States Secretary of Agriculture [13.14]

"In 1952, Elder Benson was astonished to receive a telephone call informing him that U.S. President-elect Dwight D. Eisenhower, a man he had never met, wanted to talk to him about becoming U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. Farm leaders had recommended Ezra Taft Benson as the best man for the job. With Church President David O. McKay's blessing and President Eisenhower's assurance that he need never endorse a policy that he did not agree with, Elder Benson became Secretary Benson. The Benson family returned to Washington, D.C., for the eight years of the Eisenhower administration" ("President Benson: Voice of Faith," 14–15).

The years he served politically (1953–61) were challenging years. "Early on, Elder Benson sought a blessing from the First Presidency. Assisted by J. Reuben Clark, President McKay pronounced words of comfort and counsel on the apostle's head: 'You will have a responsibility, even greater than your associates in the cabinet because you go . . . as an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. You are entitled to inspiration from on high, and if you so live and think and pray, you will have that divine guidance which others may not have. . . . We bless you, therefore, dear Brother Ezra, that when questions of right and wrong come before the men with whom you are deliberating, you may see clearly what is right, and knowing it, that you may have courage to stand by that which is right and proper. . . . We seal upon you the blessings of . . . sound judgment, clear vision, that you might see afar the needs of this country; vision that you might see, too, the enemies who would thwart the freedoms of the individual as vouchsafed by the Constitution, . . . and may you be fearless in the condemnation of these subversive influences, and strong in your defense of the rights and privileges of the Constitution'" (Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson*, 258–59).



Elder Ezra Taft Benson being sworn in as U.S. Secretary of Agriculture by Chief Justice Fred M. Vinson, with U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower looking on, January 1953

While Elder Benson served as Secretary of Agriculture, he faced many hostile groups who, after hearing him, were convinced that he was an honest man. A number of his critics became his advocates. Many times he convinced those same groups that his views were the best and that all could benefit if they supported him. President Eisenhower recognized that much of his administration's popularity, especially in the south, was due to his Secretary of Agriculture, Ezra Taft Benson.



Time magazine's "Man of the Year," April 13, 1953. Secretary Benson was on the cover of several national magazines.

"For a man who opposed big government, Ezra was taking the reins of an enormous department. The USDA housed one tenth of its 78,000 employees in the combined Administration and South buildings in Washington, D. C., containing between them nearly five thousand rooms and eight miles of corridors. The remainder were scattered in ten thousand locations throughout the United States and in fifty countries. His 1953 budget, \$2.1 billion, was, next to

the Treasury, the largest for any civilian department. He and his staff would oversee food needs for 160 million Americans" (Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson*, 260).

"In that period, controversy was raging about how to stabilize supply and demand in an uncertain farm economy, and Ezra Taft Benson's face appeared on the covers of national magazines as he dealt with the problem. He

spoke forthrightly, without regard for how popular his opinion might be. Speaking to farmers and politicians, he dared to suggest that the solutions to economic and political problems are based on spiritual and moral principles, without which no nation can have prosperity or peace. In Washington, Elder Benson instigated the practice of opening Cabinet meetings with prayer, and the Bensons presented a family home evening program to the Eisenhowers" ("President Benson: Voice of Faith," 15).

"As U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Ezra Taft Benson spent eight years in what he called 'the cross fire' of national politics. . . . He was one of only two Cabinet members who lasted both terms of President Dwight D. Eisenhower's administration. . . .

"Taking his post, he found himself in the 'hot seat'—advocating unpopular but later proven sound farm policies and programs.

"In *Cross Fire*, a book he wrote about his Cabinet years, he declared, 'In politics . . . it helps to have a hide like an elephant.'

"His critics were so vocal that another Cabinet officer once remarked, 'Every night when I go to bed I thank God I'm not the Secretary of Agriculture.'

"Though the tide of public opinion often washed against him, time proved him a wise, competent Secretary, and one of the most popular who ever served.

"**Secretary Benson** declared: 'The supreme test of any government policy, agricultural or other, should be, "How will it affect the character, morale, and well-being of our people?"'

"Standing firm in his beliefs, he won the farm vote in 1956 and again in 1960. As years passed, many critics became advocates" (Gerry Avant, "8 Years in 'Cross Fire' of U.S. Politics," *Church News*, June 4, 1994, 17).

"Throughout the Cabinet years, Elder Benson maintained a calm in the face of criticism so fierce that it amazed even those who disagreed with his policies. A plaque on



The Eisenhower cabinet. Secretary Benson is third from the right. He served as Secretary of Agriculture from 1953–61.



A welcome home at an airport in 1958

his desk reading ‘O God, give us men with a mandate higher than the ballot box’ explained one reason for his equanimity: Ezra Taft Benson merely did what he thought was best, not what might have been politically expedient. He later told the other reason: ‘I have prayed—we have prayed as a family—that we could avoid any spirit of hatred or bitterness’ (in Conference Report, Apr. 1961, p. 112)” (“President Benson: Voice of Faith,” 15).

### The Bensons Were a Close Family [13.15]

“President Benson’s family—with their musicales, home evenings, and prayers for each other—was always his refuge and support. The Washington press was astounded that Elder and Sister Benson felt no qualms about refusing social invitations when a child’s concert or a daddy-daughter scavenger hunt was at stake” (“President Benson: Voice of Faith,” 15).

“When he was asked to an important dinner by a Cabinet officer, [Ezra Taft] Benson said, ‘Sorry, I have a date with my daughter Bonnie.’

“The date was a father-daughter party and scavenger hunt at the Mormon Church. After a supper, at which each girl served her father, everybody joined the scavenger hunt. The first father-daughter team to come back with the stipulated ‘treasure’ won the evening’s prize.

“Residents of the area around the church were rather startled that night to answer their doorbells and find the broad-shouldered Secretary of Agriculture and a 14-year-old girl asking for such things as a green toothpick, an old shoelace, a 1952 calendar, and last September’s issue of a news magazine. The Benson team was so fleet, however, that it won first prize: a chest filled with ‘dollars’ (chocolate candy). ‘He was happier about this,’ said a fellow church member, ‘than an invitation to the White House.’ Such simple family enterprises afford

him a measure of relaxation that would be hard to find at functions of state” (Roul Tunley, “Everybody Picks on Benson,” *American Magazine*, June 1954, 108).

### “Pray for Dad” [13.16]

“On an April day 21 years ago, I discovered one source of a General Authority’s strength.

“I was seated with the six children of Elder Ezra Taft Benson, one of whom was my college roommate. My interest heightened when President McKay arose and announced the next speaker. I watched respectfully as Elder Benson, whom I had not yet met, walked toward the microphone. He was a big man, well over six feet tall. He was a man with a Ph.D., a man internationally known as the United States Secretary of Agriculture and a special witness of the Lord, a man who seemed serene and sure, one who had addressed audiences throughout the world. Suddenly a hand touched my arm. A little girl leaned toward me and whispered urgently, ‘Pray for dad.’

“Somewhat startled, I thought, ‘This message is being passed down the row, and I am to pass it on. Shall I say, “Pray for Elder Benson”? Shall I say, “You’re supposed to say a prayer for your father”?’ Sensing the immediate need to act, I leaned over and whispered simply, ‘Pray for dad.’

“I watched that whisper move along the row to where Sister Benson sat, her head already bowed. . . .

“As years have passed, general conferences have come and gone, and each time President Benson has stood to speak, I have thought, ‘His children, who are scattered across the continent, are united now in prayer for their father.’

“And I have come to believe that the brief message that passed along the row some 21 years ago is the most important message a family can share. What extraordinary power and faith any man can have to meet the



The Benson family with U.S. President Eisenhower (center)

daily challenge of his life if somewhere in the world his daughter or son is whispering, ‘Pray for dad’” (Elaine S. McKay, “Pray for Dad,” *New Era*, Jan.–Feb. 1981, 7).



On a family outing

## He Taught about the Importance of the Home [13.17]

**Elder Ezra Taft Benson** said: “No nation rises above its homes. In building character the church, the school, and even the nation stand helpless when confronted with a weakened and degraded home. The good home is the rock foundation—the cornerstone of civilization. There can be no genuine happiness separate and apart from a good home, with the old-fashioned virtues at its base. If your nation is to endure, the home must be safeguarded, strengthened, and restored to its rightful importance” (in Conference Report, April 1966, 130).

## He Became President of the Twelve [13.18]

On December 30, 1973, at the age of 74, Elder Ezra Taft Benson was set apart as president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “He had been an apostle for thirty years and from the moment his colleague who had sat next to him throughout that entire period was ordained the prophet, Ezra sustained him fully. . . .

“As for his own assignment, which had come so unexpectedly, he confided in his journal: ‘It is almost overwhelming as I contemplate . . . being called to serve as the President of the Twelve. With all my heart I will seek the inspiration of heaven and the blessings of our Heavenly Father. I know the work is true. I know that God lives and that this Church carries the name of Jesus Christ. With His aid and

the aid of my Heavenly Father, I am sure I will be blessed with success in my humble efforts.’ . . .

“In April 1974 President Kimball outlined his vision of an expanded missionary program in a masterful address to Regional Representatives [see Spencer W. Kimball, “When the World Will Be Converted,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1974, 3–14]. **Elder William Grant Bangerter** of the First Quorum of the Seventy recalled that President Kimball had not spoken long when ‘a new awareness seemed suddenly to fall on the congregation. We became alert to an astonishing spiritual presence, and we realized that we were listening to something unusual. . . . It was as if, spiritually speaking, our hair began to stand on end.’ When President Kimball concluded, **President Benson** declared in a voice filled with emotion, ‘President Kimball, through all the years that these meetings have been held, we have never heard such an address as you have just given. Truly there is a prophet in Israel.’ That night Ezra recorded in his journal, ‘It is my prayer that Brother Kimball will live for many, many years. The Lord is magnifying him. The mantle of the President has fallen upon him. He . . . will be a great blessing to the entire Church’” (Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson*, 426, 431).



With President Spencer W. Kimball

## Spirituality Is a Key to Keeping Freedom Alive [13.19]

**President Ezra Taft Benson** was a strong advocate of freedom. On one occasion he wrote: “What can we do to keep the light of freedom alive? Keep the commandments of God. Walk circumspectly before Him. Pay our tithes and fast offerings. Attend our temples. Stay morally clean. Participate in local elections, for the Lord has said, ‘Honest men and wise men should be sought for diligently, and good men and wise men ye should

observe to uphold.’ (D&C 98:10.) Be honest in all our dealings. Faithfully hold our family home evenings. Pray—pray to the God of heaven that He will intervene to preserve our precious freedoms, that His gospel may go to every nation and people. Yes, in the words of the Lord Himself: ‘Stand ye in holy places, and be not moved, until the day of the Lord come. . . .’ (D&C 87:8.) Those ‘holy places’ are our temples, stakes, wards, and homes” (*This Nation Shall Endure* [1977], 9–10).



The First Presidency: Ezra Taft Benson, Gordon B. Hinckley, and Thomas S. Monson

## He Became President of the Church [13.20]

On November 10, 1985, nearly 12 years after he became President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, **President Ezra Taft Benson** was ordained and set apart as President of the Church. It was not a day he had anticipated. He and Sister Benson had prayed that President Kimball’s life would be prolonged. Nevertheless, he said: “Now that the Lord has spoken, we will do our best, under his guiding direction, to move the work forward in the earth. . . .

“Some have expectantly inquired about the direction the Church will take in the future. May we suggest that the Lord, through President Kimball, has sharply focused on the threefold mission of the Church: to preach the gospel, to perfect the saints, and to redeem the dead. We shall continue every effort to carry out this mission” (quoted in Don L. Searle, “President Ezra Taft Benson Ordained Thirteenth President of the Church,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1985, 5).

“[President Benson] was eighty-six when the mantle of the prophet came upon him, but he was noticeably enlivened and strengthened by the call. He traveled extensively throughout the Church, dedicating temples and speaking to the Saints. . . .

“During his presidency, President Benson witnessed another remarkable set of events involving the principles of freedom he had defended so forthrightly throughout his life. Miraculously, the Iron Curtain in eastern Europe began to part for the blessing of the people he had grown to love after World War II. In 1985 the Freiberg Temple, located in the German Democratic Republic, had been dedicated—a miracle in itself. But without missionary work in that country, the Church’s growth was limited. Then, in 1988, the Communist government of the German Democratic Republic granted permission for missionaries to serve there and also for its young citizens to serve missions elsewhere.

“By 1990, winds of political change were sweeping the world. Barriers between East and West began to dissolve as the peoples of eastern Europe and other nations fervently embraced principles of democracy and religion” (“President Benson: Voice of Faith,” 16, 18–19).

## President Benson Loved the Book of Mormon [13.21]

**President Howard W. Hunter**, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said:

“President Benson spoke lovingly and frequently of missionary work and temples and the responsibilities of the priesthood. He spoke of our pioneer heritage and the dangers of pride and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. But most of all he spoke of his beloved Book of Mormon.

“Will any generation, including those yet unborn, look back on the administration of President Ezra Taft Benson and not immediately think of his love for the Book of Mormon? Perhaps no President of the Church since the Prophet Joseph Smith himself has done more to teach the truths of the Book of Mormon, to make it a daily course of study for the entire membership of the Church, and to ‘flood the earth’ with its distribution.

“At the very outset of his ministry as prophet, seer, and revelator, President Benson said unequivocally, ‘The Book of Mormon must be reenthroned in the minds and hearts of our people. We must honor it by reading, by studying it, by taking its precepts into our lives and transforming



He had a lifetime love of the Book of Mormon.

them into lives required of the true followers of Christ” (“A Strong and Mighty Man,” *Ensign*, July 1994, 42).

## The Book of Mormon Brings Men to Christ [13.22]

**President Ezra Taft Benson**, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught how the Book of Mormon brings people to Christ:



President Benson speaking at general conference

“The Book of Mormon brings men to Christ through two basic means. First, it tells in a plain manner of Christ and his gospel. It testifies of his divinity and of the necessity for a Redeemer and the need of our putting trust in him. It bears witness of the Fall and the Atonement and the first principles of the gospel, including our need of a broken heart and a contrite spirit and a spiritual rebirth. It proclaims

we must endure to the end in righteousness and live the moral life of a Saint.

“Second, the Book of Mormon exposes the enemies of Christ. It confounds false doctrines and lays down contention. (See 2 Ne. 3:12.) It fortifies the humble followers of Christ against the evil designs, strategies, and doctrines of the devil in our day. The type of apostates in the Book of Mormon are similar to the type we have today. God, with his infinite foreknowledge, so molded the Book of Mormon that we might see the error and know how to combat false educational, political, religious, and philosophical concepts of our time” (“The Book of Mormon Is the Word of God,” *Ensign*, May 1975, 64).

## He Gave a Blessing of Increased Discernment and Understanding [13.23]

At the close of the April 1986 general conference, **President Ezra Taft Benson** gave a prophet’s blessing:

“In our day, the Lord has revealed the need to reemphasize the Book of Mormon to get the Church and all the children of Zion out from under the condemnation—the scourge and judgment. (See D&C 84:54–58.) This message must be carried to the members of the Church throughout the world. . . .

“Now, in the authority of the sacred priesthood in me vested, I invoke my blessing upon the Latter-day Saints and upon good people everywhere.

“I bless you with increased discernment to judge between Christ and anti-Christ. I bless you with increased power to do good and to resist evil. I bless you with increased *understanding* of the Book of Mormon. I promise you that from this moment forward, if we will daily sup from its pages and abide by its precepts, God will pour out upon each child of Zion and the Church a blessing hitherto unknown—and we will plead to the Lord that He will begin to lift the condemnation—the scourge and judgment. Of this I bear solemn witness” (“A Sacred Responsibility,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 78).

## “I Have a Vision of Flooding the Earth with the Book of Mormon” [13.24]

**President Ezra Taft Benson** told Church members:

“The Book of Mormon is the instrument that God designed to ‘sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out [His] elect.’ (Moses 7:62.) This sacred volume of scripture needs to become more central in our preaching, our teaching, and our missionary work. . . .

“The time is long overdue for a massive flooding of the earth with the Book of Mormon for the many reasons which the Lord has given. In this age of electronic media and mass distribution of the printed word, God will hold us accountable if we do not now move the Book of Mormon in a monumental way.

“We have the Book of Mormon, we have the members, we have the missionaries, we have the resources, and the world has the need. *The time is now!* . . .

“I have a vision of homes alerted, of classes alive, and of pulpits aflame with the spirit of Book of Mormon messages.

“I have a vision of home teachers and visiting teachers, ward and branch officers, and stake and mission leaders counseling our people out of the most correct of any book on earth—the Book of Mormon.

“I have a vision of artists putting into film, drama, literature, music, and paintings great themes and great characters from the Book of Mormon.

“I have a vision of thousands of missionaries going into the mission field with hundreds of passages memorized from the Book of Mormon so that they might feed the needs of a spiritually famished world.

“I have a vision of the whole Church getting nearer to God by abiding by the precepts of the Book of Mormon.



The Benson family visiting a ranch

"Indeed, I have a vision of flooding the earth with the Book of Mormon.

"My beloved Saints, I am now entering my ninetieth year. I am getting older and less vigorous. . . .

"I do not know fully why God has preserved my life to this age, but I do know this: That for the present hour He has revealed to me the absolute need for us to move the Book of Mormon forward now in a marvelous manner. You must help with this burden and with this blessing which He has placed on the whole Church, even all the children of Zion.

"Moses never entered the promised land. Joseph Smith never saw Zion redeemed. Some of us may not live long enough to see the day when the Book of Mormon floods the earth and when the Lord lifts His condemnation. (See D&C 84:54–58.) But, God willing, I intend to spend all my remaining days in that glorious effort" ("Flooding the Earth with the Book of Mormon," *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 4–6; italics added).

## He Counseled the Youth to Be Clean [13.25]

**President Ezra Taft Benson** gave the following counsel on chastity to the youth:

"I recognize that most people fall into sexual sin in a misguided attempt to fulfill basic human needs. We all have a need to feel loved and worthwhile. We all seek to have joy and happiness in our lives. Knowing this, Satan often lures people into immorality by playing on their basic needs. He promises pleasure, happiness, and fulfillment.

"But this is, of course, a deception. . . .

"Do not be misled by Satan's lies. There is no lasting happiness in immorality. There is no joy to be found in breaking the law of chastity. Just the opposite is true. There may be momentary pleasure. For a time it may

seem like everything is wonderful. But quickly the relationship will sour. Guilt and shame set in. We become fearful that our sins will be discovered. We must sneak and hide, lie and cheat. Love begins to die. Bitterness, jealousy, anger, and even hate begin to grow. All of these are the natural results of sin and transgression.

"On the other hand, when we obey the law of chastity and keep ourselves morally clean, we will experience the blessings of increased love and peace, greater trust and respect for our marital partners, deeper commitment to each other, and, therefore, a deep and significant sense of joy and happiness" ("The Law of Chastity," in *Brigham Young University 1987–88 Devotional and Fireside Speeches* [1988], 50–51).

## He Counseled Single Adult Men to Pursue the Goal of a Celestial Marriage [13.26]

After counseling the young single adult men of the Church to examine their priorities, **President Ezra Taft Benson** said:

"May I now say an additional word about an eternal opportunity and responsibility . . . which is of greatest importance to you. I am referring to celestial marriage. . . .



President Benson speaking at a general priesthood meeting

" . . . We want you to know that the position of the Church has never changed regarding the importance of celestial marriage. It is a commandment of God. The Lord's declaration in Genesis is still true: 'And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone' (Genesis 2:18).

"To obtain a fulness of glory and exaltation in the celestial kingdom, one must enter into this holiest of ordinances.

"Without marriage, the purposes of the Lord would be frustrated. Choice spirits would be withheld from the experience of mortality. And postponing marriage unduly often means limiting your posterity, and the time will come, brethren, when you will feel and know that loss.

"I can assure you that the greatest responsibility and the greatest joys in life are centered in the family, honorable marriage, and rearing a righteous posterity. And the older you become, the less likely you are to marry, and then you may lose these eternal blessings altogether. . . .

"I realize that some of you brethren may have genuine fears regarding the real responsibilities that will be yours if you do marry. You are concerned about being able to support a wife and family and provide them with the necessities in these uncertain economic times. Those fears must be replaced with faith.

"I assure you, brethren, that if you will be industrious, faithfully pay your tithes and offerings, and conscientiously keep the commandments, the Lord will sustain you. Yes, there will be sacrifices required, but you will grow from these and will be a better man for having met them.

"Work hard educationally and in your vocation. Put your trust in the Lord, have faith, and it will work out. The Lord never gives a commandment without providing the means to accomplish it (see 1 Nephi 3:7).

"Also, do not be caught up in materialism, one of the real plagues of our generation—that is, acquiring things, fast-paced living, and securing career success in the single state.

"Honorable marriage is more important than wealth, position, and status. As husband and wife, you can achieve your life's goals together. As you sacrifice for each other and your children, the Lord will bless you, and your commitment to the Lord and your service in His kingdom will be enhanced.

"Now, brethren, do not expect perfection in your choice of a mate. Do not be so particular that you overlook her most important qualities of having a strong testimony, living the principles of the gospel, loving home, wanting to be a mother in Zion, and supporting you in your priesthood responsibilities.

"Of course, she should be attractive to you, but do not just date one girl after another for the sole pleasure of



He enjoyed playing baseball.

dating without seeking the Lord's confirmation in your choice of your eternal companion.

"And one good yardstick as to whether a person might be the right one for you is this: in her presence, do you think your noblest thoughts, do you aspire to your finest deeds, do you wish you were better than you are?" ("To the Single Adult Brethren of the Church," *Ensign*, May 1988, 51–53).

## He Counseled Single Adult Sisters to Keep the Goal of a Celestial Marriage [13.27]

After expressing his love and gratitude to the single adult sisters of the Church, **President Ezra Taft Benson** said:

"I would like to express the hope we all have for you, which is so real, that you will be exalted in the highest degree of glory in the celestial kingdom and that you will enter into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage.

"Dear sisters, never lose sight of this sacred goal. Prayerfully prepare for it and live for it. Be married the Lord's way. Temple marriage is a gospel ordinance of exaltation. Our Father in Heaven wants each of His daughters to have this eternal blessing.

"Therefore, don't trifle away your happiness by involvement with someone who cannot take you worthily to the temple. Make a decision now that this is the place where you will marry. To leave that decision until a romantic involvement develops is to take a risk the importance of which you cannot now fully calculate.

"And remember, you are not required to lower your standards in order to get a mate. Keep yourselves



Always willing to teach

attractive, maintain high standards, maintain your self-respect. Do not engage in intimacies that bring heartache and sorrow. Place yourselves in a position to meet worthy men and be engaged in constructive activities.

“But also, do not expect perfection in your choice of a mate. Do not be so concerned about his physical appearance and his bank account that you overlook his more important qualities. Of course, he should be attractive to you, and he should be able to financially provide for you. But, does he have a strong testimony? Does he live the principles of the gospel and magnify his priesthood? Is he active in his ward and stake? Does he love home and family, and will he be a faithful husband and a good father? *These* are qualities that really matter.

“And I would also caution you single sisters not to become so independent and self-reliant that you decide marriage isn’t worth it and you can do just as well on your own. Some of our sisters indicate that they do not want to consider marriage until *after* they have completed their degrees or pursued a career. This is not right. Certainly we want our single sisters to maximize their individual potential, to be well educated, and to do well at their present employment. You have much to contribute to society, to your community, and to your neighborhood. But we earnestly pray that our single sisters will desire honorable marriage in the temple to a worthy man and rear a righteous family, even though this may mean the sacrificing of degrees and careers. Our priorities are right when we realize there is no higher calling than to be an honorable wife and mother.

“I also recognize that not all women in the Church will have an opportunity for marriage and motherhood in mortality. But if those of you in this situation are worthy and endure faithfully, you can be assured of all blessings from a kind and loving Heavenly Father—and I emphasize *all blessings*.

“I assure you that if you have to wait even until the next life to be blessed with a choice companion, God will surely compensate you. Time is numbered only to man. God has your eternal perspective in mind” (“To the Single Adult Sisters of the Church,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 96–97).

## He Counseled Fathers on Their Eternal Calling [13.28]

**President Ezra Taft Benson** said:

“Fathers, yours is an eternal calling from which you are never released. Callings in the Church, as important as they are, by their very nature are only for a period of time, and then an appropriate release takes place. But a father’s



A light moment with some young women

calling is eternal, and its importance transcends time. It is a calling for both time and eternity. . . .

“What . . . is a father’s specific responsibility within the sacred walls of his home? May I suggest two basic responsibilities of every father in Israel.

“First, you have a sacred responsibility to provide for the material needs of your family. . . .

“Second, you have a sacred responsibility to provide spiritual leadership in your family. . . .

“Mothers play an important role as the heart of the home, but this in no way lessens the equally important role fathers should play, as head of the home, in nurturing, training, and loving their children.

“As the patriarch in your home, you have a serious responsibility to assume leadership in working with your children. You must help create a home where the Spirit of the Lord can abide. Your place is to give direction to all family life” (“To the Fathers in Israel,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 48–50).

**President Benson** later said:

"We once knew well . . . our Father in Heaven. . . .

"Now we are here. Our memories are veiled. We are showing God and ourselves what we can do. Nothing is going to startle us more when we pass through the veil to the other side than to realize how well we know our Father and how familiar His face is to us" ("Jesus Christ—Gifts and Expectations," *Ensign*, Dec. 1988, 6).

## He Counseled Mothers about the Nobility of Their Work [13.29]

In a fireside address to parents, **President Ezra Taft Benson** spoke of the important role of mothers:

"No more sacred word exists in secular or holy writ than that of *mother*. There is no more noble work than that of a good and God-fearing mother. . . .

"In the eternal family, God established that fathers are to preside in the home. Fathers are to provide, to love, to teach, and to direct.

"But a mother's role is also God-ordained. Mothers are to conceive, to bear, to nourish, to love, and to train. So declare the revelations. . . .



**President Ezra Taft Benson**

"Now, my dear mothers, knowing of your divine role to bear and rear children and bring them back to Him, how will you accomplish this in the Lord's way? I say the 'Lord's way,' because it is different from the world's way.

"The Lord clearly defined the roles of mothers and fathers in providing for and rearing a righteous posterity. In the beginning,

Adam—not Eve—was instructed to earn the bread by the sweat of his brow. Contrary to conventional wisdom, a mother's calling is in the home, not the marketplace.

". . . In the Doctrine and Covenants, we read: 'Women have claim on their husbands for their maintenance, until their husbands are taken' (D&C 83:2). This is the divine right of a wife and mother. She cares for and nourishes her children at home. Her husband earns the living for the family, which makes this nourishing possible. With that claim on their husbands for their financial support, the counsel of the Church has always been for mothers to spend their full time in the home in rearing and caring for their children.

"We realize also that some of our choice sisters are widowed and divorced and that others find themselves in unusual circumstances where, out of necessity, they are required to work for a period of time. But these instances are the exception, not the rule" (*To the Mothers in Zion* [pamphlet, 1987], 1–3, 5–6).



**President and Sister Benson**

## He Warned Against Pride [13.30]

**President Ezra Taft Benson** urged members of the Church to overcome pride with a broken heart and a contrite spirit:

"Most of us think of pride as self-centeredness, conceit, boastfulness, arrogance, or haughtiness. All of these are elements of the sin, but the heart, or core, is still missing.

"The central feature of pride is enmity—enmity toward God and enmity toward our fellowmen. *Enmity* means 'hatred toward, hostility to, or a state of opposition.' It is the power by which Satan wishes to reign over us.

"Pride is essentially competitive in nature. We pit our will against God's. When we direct our pride toward God, it is in the spirit of 'my will and not thine be done.' As Paul said, they 'seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.' (Philip. 2:21.)

"Our will in competition to God's will allows desires, appetites, and passions to go unbridled. (See Alma 38:12; 3 Ne. 12:30.)

"The proud cannot accept the authority of God giving direction to their lives. (See Hel. 12:6.) They pit their perceptions of truth against God's great knowledge, their abilities versus God's priesthood power, their accomplishments against His mighty works. . . .

"Pride is a sin that can readily be seen in others but is rarely admitted in ourselves. Most of us consider pride to be a sin of those on the top, such as the rich and the learned, looking down at the rest of us. (See 2 Ne. 9:42.) There is, however, a far more common ailment among us—and that is pride from the bottom looking up. It is manifest in so many ways, such as faultfinding, gossiping, backbiting, murmuring, living beyond our means, envying, coveting, withholding gratitude and praise that might lift another, and being unforgiving and jealous. . . .

"Pride affects all of us at various times and in various degrees. Now you can see why the building in Lehi's

dream that represents the pride of the world was large and spacious and great was the multitude that did enter into it. (See 1 Ne. 8:26, 33, 11:35–36.)

“Pride is the universal sin, the great vice. Yes, pride is the universal sin, the great vice.

“The antidote for pride is humility—meekness, submissiveness. (See Alma 7:23.) It is the broken heart and contrite spirit. (See 3 Ne. 9:20, 12:19; D&C 20:37, 59:8; Ps. 34:18; Isa. 57:15, 66:2.) . . .

“God will have a humble people. Either we can choose to be humble or we can be compelled to be humble. Alma said, ‘Blessed are they who humble themselves without being compelled to be humble.’ (Alma 32:16.)

“Let us choose to be humble. . . .

“Pride is the great stumbling block to Zion. I repeat: Pride is the great stumbling block to Zion.

“We must cleanse the inner vessel by conquering pride. (See Alma 6:2–4; Matt. 23:25–26.)” (“Beware of Pride,” *Ensign*, May 1989, 4–7).

## We Believe in Christ [13.31]

Throughout his ministry, **President Ezra Taft Benson** bore strong testimony of Jesus Christ and His power to change lives:

“The question is sometimes asked, ‘Are Mormons Christians?’ We declare the divinity of Jesus Christ. We look to Him as the only source of our salvation. We strive to live His teachings, and we look forward to the time that He shall come again on this earth to rule and reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. In the words of a Book of Mormon prophet, we say to men today, ‘There [is] no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent’ (Mosiah 3:17)” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [1988], 10).



Grand marshal of a parade in Preston, Idaho, 1976



President Benson meets with U.S. President Ronald Reagan in the Oval Office of the White House, Washington, D.C., in January 1986, to discuss the Church's contribution of \$10 million in aid to alleviate world hunger.

“The Lord works from the inside out. The world works from the outside in. The world would take people out of the slums. Christ takes the slums out of people, and then they take themselves out of the slums. The world would mold men by changing their environment. Christ changes men, who then change their environment. The world would shape human behavior, but Christ can change human nature” (“Born of God,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 6).

“Men and women who turn their lives over to God will discover that He can make a lot more out of their lives than they can. He will deepen their joys, expand their vision, quicken their minds, strengthen their muscles, lift their spirits, multiply their blessings, increase their opportunities, comfort their souls, raise up friends, and pour out peace. Whoever will lose his life in the service of God will find eternal life (see Matthew 10:39)” (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, 361).

## He Received a Presidential Citation [13.32]

“The U.S. Presidential Citizens Medal was presented Aug. 30 [1989] to President Ezra Taft Benson for ‘a lifetime of dedicated service to country, community, church and family.’

“Brent Scowcroft, assistant to President George Bush for national security affairs and a former Utahn, presented the medal on behalf of President Bush, who expressed his regrets for not being able to present it in person.

“The White House announced the award in July. It was the first made by President Bush since he took office.

“‘President Bush is honoring you as one of the most distinguished Americans of your time,’ Scowcroft told the 90-year-old Church leader, who was U.S. Secretary of Agriculture from 1953 to 1960.

“‘This is an unusual medal,’ he said. ‘It was established in 1969 by executive order for the purpose of recognizing citizens of the United States who have performed exemplary deeds of service for their country or fellow citizens.



U.S. President George H. W. Bush, President Ezra Taft Benson, and President Gordon B. Hinckley

“‘President Bush feels that your long and distinguished life of service to your country, to its citizens, and, indeed, to all mankind is uniquely representative of the values that this medal is designed to recognize,’ Scowcroft told President Benson.

“President Benson replied, ‘I don’t merit this honor.’ Scowcroft countered, ‘Yes, you certainly do. Richly so.’

“The text of the citation accompanying the medal reads: “‘The President of the United States of America awards this Presidential Citizens Medal to Ezra Taft Benson. A lifetime of dedicated service to your country, community, church and family make Ezra Taft Benson one of the most distinguished Americans of his time. As agriculture adviser to Presidents Roosevelt and Eisenhower, leader



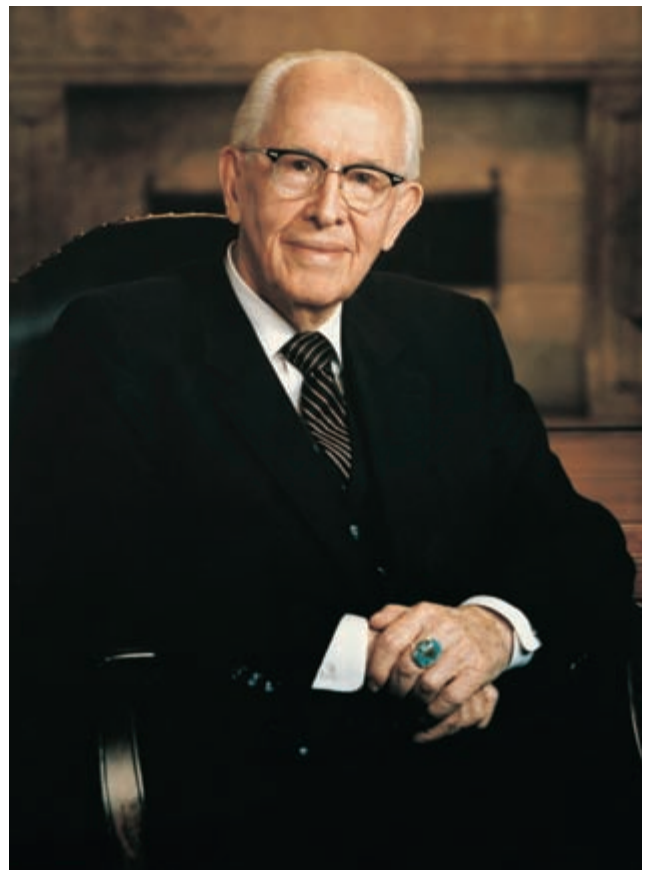
The First Presidency: Gordon B. Hinckley, Ezra Taft Benson, and Thomas S. Monson

of his Church, and 60-year friend of the Boy Scouts of America, he has worked tirelessly. His devotion to family and commitment to the principles of freedom are an example for all Americans” (“Prophet Receives U.S. Presidential Medal,” *Church News*, Sept. 2, 1989, 4).

### The Passing of a Prophet [13.33]

President Ezra Taft Benson died of heart failure Monday, May 30, 1994, at the age of 94. He had served as a General Authority for over 50 years. Throughout his life he had faithfully served the Lord, the Church, his family, and country. As a tribute to his lifetime of service, President Ezra Taft Benson received 14 honorary degrees from American colleges and universities.

He chose to be buried in Whitney, Idaho, the small farming community where he was born, next to his beloved wife, Flora, who had passed away in August 1992. They had been married 66 years.



President Ezra Taft Benson

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# Howard W. Hunter

Fourteenth President of the Church

14

## Highlights in the Life of Howard W. Hunter

### Age Events

	He was born November 14, 1907, in Boise, Idaho, to John William and Nellie Marie Rasmussen Hunter.
3	He contracted polio and recovered (1911).
12	He was baptized in an indoor swimming pool (Apr. 4, 1920).
15	He earned the rank of Eagle Scout (May 11, 1923).
19	He set sail aboard the SS <i>President Jackson</i> with “Hunter’s Croonaders,” a dance band and the ship’s orchestra, for a two-month Oriental cruise (Jan. 5, 1927).
21	The Great Depression began in the United States (Oct. 1929).
22	He received his patriarchal blessing (Mar. 1930).
23	He married Claire Jeffs (June 10, 1931; she died Oct. 9, 1983).
31	He graduated <i>cum laude</i> , third in his class, from law school (1939).
42	He was called as president of the Pasadena California Stake (Feb. 25, 1950).
46	He was sealed to his parents in the Mesa Arizona Temple (Nov. 14, 1953).
51	He was ordained an Apostle by President David O. McKay (Oct. 15, 1959).
62	He was called as Church Historian (Jan. 24, 1970).
77	He was set apart as Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (Nov. 10, 1985).
80	He became President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (June 2, 1988).
81	He dedicated the BYU Jerusalem Center (May 1989).
82	He married Inis Bernice Egan (Apr. 12, 1990).
85	He was confronted by a threatening intruder while speaking at the BYU Marriott Center, Provo, Utah (Feb. 7, 1993).
86	He became President of the Church (June 5, 1994).
87	He presided over the creation of the Church’s 2,000th stake—the Mexico City Mexico Contreras Stake (Dec. 11, 1994); he died in Salt Lake City, Utah (Mar. 3, 1995).

## The Achievement of Greatness Is a Long-Term Process [14.1]

**President Howard W. Hunter** could well have been describing his own life when he said:

“There is no such thing as instant greatness. This is because the achievement of true greatness is a long-term process. It may involve occasional setbacks. The end result may not always be clearly visible, but it seems that it always requires regular, consistent, small, and sometimes ordinary and mundane steps over a long period of time. . . .

“True greatness is never a result of a chance occurrence or a one-time effort or achievement. It requires the development of character. It requires a multitude of correct decisions for the everyday choices between good and evil. . . .

“As we evaluate our lives, it is important that we look, not only at our accomplishments, but also at the conditions under which we have labored. We are all different and unique individuals. We have each had different starting points in the race of life. We each have a unique mixture of talents and skills. We each have our own set of challenges and constraints to contend with” (“What Is True Greatness,” in *Brigham Young University 1986–87 Devotional and Fireside Speeches* [1987], 115).



John and Nellie Hunter,  
Howard W. Hunter's parents

## He Was of Scottish Heritage [14.2]

The Hunter clan settled in Scotland during the 12th and 13th centuries. There they built Hunterston Castle near Hunter's Toune (town). “On May 2, 1374, Scotland's King Robert II signed a piece of parchment confirming a royal charter of land to William Hunter, the laird (lord, or owner) of Hunterston Castle, ‘for his faithful service rendered and to be rendered to us.’ . . .

“John Hunter, Howard W. Hunter's great-grandfather, was born in Paisley, Renfrewshire, Scotland, not far from Hunterston Castle. . . .

“In 1860 missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints brought the message of the restored gospel to Paisley, and among those whom they baptized were John and Margaret [his wife] Hunter. At the time the Church was encouraging new converts to gather with

the Saints in the Salt Lake Valley, and the missionaries urged John and his family to emigrate. This presented a difficult problem, for John would have to give up a prosperous business, and the family, a comfortable home. . . .

“ . . . When they reached the Salt Lake Valley in late September 1860, John soon became disenchanted and, as his son John [Howard W. Hunter's grandfather] described it, ‘finally detached himself and family from the Church, . . . leaving the family in a strange country without a guide’” (Eleanor Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter* [1994], 1–2, 4).



Howard W. Hunter, about 2 years old, 1909

## His Parents and Early Years Helped Shape Him [14.3]

“In 1904, Nellie Marie Rasmussen, who would become President Hunter's mother, traveled from her home in Mt. Pleasant, Utah, to visit an aunt in Boise, Idaho. While there, she met John William Hunter. They courted for the next two years; however, he was not a member of the Church at the time, and Nellie, not wanting to marry out of the Church, returned to Mt. Pleasant. But John persisted, and they were married December 3, 1906. The couple moved to Boise, where they rented a little house on Sherman Street. Howard William Hunter was born in Boise on November 14, 1907, and his sister, Dorothy, was born two years later” (James E. Faust, “The Way of an Eagle,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1994, 4).



Howard W. Hunter, about 5 years old

Howard's mother was active in the Church all her life and encouraged Howard to participate in all of the Church activities available in Boise, Idaho. Occasionally, Howard's father would attend Church with Nellie and the children. Howard was not allowed to be baptized when he was eight years old because his father felt that he was not old enough

to make such choices on his own. But when Howard was 12 years old he approached his father and asked that he be allowed to be baptized. He wanted earnestly to receive the Aaronic Priesthood and be allowed to pass the sacrament. His father consented and he was baptized on April 4, 1920. Eleven weeks after his baptism he was ordained a deacon. "I remember the first time I passed the sacrament," he said. "I was frightened, but thrilled to have the privilege. After the meeting the bishop complimented me on the way I had conducted myself. The bishop was always so thoughtful of me" (quoted in J. M. Heslop, "He Found Pleasure in Work," *Church News*, Nov. 16, 1974, 4).

## Experiences of His Early Youth Showed His Determination and Strength [14.4]

"Not long after Dorothy [Howard W. Hunter's sister] was born, Nellie sterilized some water by boiling it in a pan on the living-room stove that the family used for heat. She had taken it off the stove and, because it was too hot to hold, set it on the floor when Howard came running through the house. He fell headlong into the pan, throwing his left hand in front of himself, and it was badly scalded. In his history many years later he described what happened:



Howard W. Hunter, about 8 years old, with his sister Dorothy

"A call was made to the doctor and he recommended that my arm be packed in mashed potatoes and bandaged. Some of the neighbor ladies came in to help. I can remember sitting on the drain board in the kitchen while boiled potatoes were mashed and packed around my arm and cloths were torn into strips to make a bandage. Fortunately the serious burn did not hinder the growth of my arm, but I have carried the scar all my life'" (Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter*, 18).

"Young Howard sold newspapers on a street corner in Boise. His family lived near the country club, so he frequently caddied for golfers there. He framed pictures in an art store, delivered telegrams, did odd jobs in a department store. Because of his success with a project at his after-school job in a drugstore, he won

a correspondence course in pharmacy and completed it before he was out of high school.

"It seemed that whatever good thing he set his mind to do, he succeeded. In [1920], when funds were being raised for a new chapel in Boise, Howard, a deacon, was the first to offer a pledge. He donated twenty-five dollars—not a small sum for a boy of twelve" (Don L. Searle, "President Howard W. Hunter, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles," *Ensign*, Apr. 1986, 22).

## He Had Many Talents [14.5]

"My mother said that from the time he was a baby, he always kept perfect time' to music, recalls [Howard W. Hunter's] sister, Dorothy Hunter Rasmussen. 'He has perfect pitch,' she says, and 'a beautiful voice.' Those



Howard W. Hunter, about 12 years old, 1919

musical talents would become important in his life.

"But some other qualities showed up early, too. 'He was always a very good student,' Sister Rasmussen says. He had 'this driving ambition, and he had a brilliant mind.' And yet his ambition and intelligence were tempered with love and compassion. He would win other boys' marbles in play—and then decline

to keep them. He once turned down a job he wanted when he learned that another boy would be let go to make a place for him" (Searle, "President Hunter, Acting President," 22).

"For the most part Howard did well in school. However, he claims he did have two handicaps: 'I was not good in sports and I had a problem telling colors—not all colors, but shades of red, green, and brown.'

"He devised an ingenious way to solve his color-blindness problem. He would put his crayons at the top of his desk, and when the art teacher asked the students to pick up a crayon of a certain color, he would run his finger over the crayons on his desk and Beatrice Beach, who sat behind him, would touch him on the shoulder when he came to the right one. He was embarrassed to admit to the teacher that he couldn't distinguish the colors.

"As for Howard's other 'handicap,' his lack of interest in sports, the closest he got to even attending an athletic contest was when he went to football games one year

in high school and called in the scores to the local newspaper. He enjoyed reading, writing, and most other academic subjects, but he didn't always work hard to master them. He had many other interests as well, such as a succession of after-school and summer jobs" (Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter*, 32).

### He Became an Eagle Scout [14.6]

The scouting program was only a decade old when Howard W. Hunter became involved in it. At one point he realized that if he continued earning merit badges at the pace he was going, he would be the first Eagle Scout in Idaho.



He was one of the first Eagle Scouts in Idaho.

"When Howard returned from camp that year, he had passed nine more merit badges. These badges, and one he had earned before camp, were awarded at a court of honor September 14, 1922, at a joint meeting of the Rotary Club and the Boise Council, with the mayor and other prominent men of the city present.

"By the time the court of honor was held,' Howard said, 'I had qualified for fifteen merit badges and for the Life Scout and Star Scout awards. Only six more were required for the

rank of Eagle Scout. The scouting magazine had carried stories of boys who had gained the rank of Eagle, but we were told there had not yet been one in Idaho. The race was on between Edwin Phipps of Troop 6 and me.'

"When the next court of honor was held, both boys had earned twenty-one merit badges, the number necessary for Eagle rank, but Edwin had completed all the required ones, while Howard still lacked the required badges in athletics, civics, and cooking. Thus, Edwin received his Eagle in March 1923, two months before Howard received his" (Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter*, 39–40).

He has since been recognized as the second Eagle Scout in Boise and possibly the entire state of Idaho.

### He Was a Young Entrepreneur [14.7]

"Another boyhood pursuit [of Howard W. Hunter] was picking up broken alarm clocks that had been discarded. He took them apart, repaired and lubricated them, and got them in working order. Then he would sell them for pocket money.

"One job Howard tried was sorting lemons, separating the green ones from the yellow ones. This was one of the few tasks for which he had no aptitude whatever—being colorblind, he could not tell the difference! Interestingly, he later went on to become somewhat of an expert on bananas" (Faust, "The Way of an Eagle," 6).

### He Organized Hunter's Croonaders [14.8]

"During Howard's second year in high school, he entered a sales contest sponsored by Sampson Music Company. Purchasers of merchandise in the store received one point for every dollar spent and could designate which contest entrant would receive the points. Howard encouraged all his friends and acquaintances to shop at Sampson's, and the points credited to him gave him the second-place prize, a marimba. He soon taught himself to play it well enough to perform at school, church, and other programs, and then as part of a dance orchestra.

"Most orchestras were not large enough to have a marimba player unless he doubled on other instruments,' Howard explained, 'so I commenced to play drums as well. As I played more and more on a professional basis, I started to play saxophone and clarinet and later added the trumpet.' He also played the piano and the violin, which he had studied for about a year each while in elementary school.

"In the fall of 1924, after playing with several orchestras, Howard organized his own group, which he named Hunter's Croonaders. That November and December the group played for six dances, and the next year they had fifty-three dance engagements at public halls and restaurants, private parties and wedding receptions, schools and churches, civic clubs and fraternities. Most



Howard W. Hunter with his saxophone



He formed a five-piece orchestra called the Croonaders. Howard W. Hunter is in the center, holding the saxophone.

of the work was in Boise and nearby towns, but occasionally the group played a little farther afield" (Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter*, 45–46).

In 1926 Howard was offered an opportunity to form a five-piece orchestra for a two-month cruise to the Orient on the passenger liner SS *President Jackson*. The group was hired to play background music for movies shown on the ship. They also played classical music for dinner and ballroom dancing.

## A Sunday School Lesson Encouraged Him to Receive His Patriarchal Blessing [14.9]

"In the young adult Sunday School class [**Howard W. Hunter**] experienced a major turning point in his hunger for gospel knowledge. In his history he wrote:

"Although I had attended Church classes most of my life, my first real awakening to the gospel came in a Sunday School class in Adams Ward taught by Brother Peter A. Clayton. He had a wealth of knowledge and the ability to inspire young people. I studied the lessons, read the outside assignments he gave us, and participated in speaking on assigned subjects. I suddenly became aware of the real meaning of some of the gospel principles, an understanding of the degrees of glory, and the requirements of celestial exaltation as Brother Clayton taught and instructed us. I think of this period of my life as the time the truths of the gospel commenced to unfold. I always had a testimony of the gospel, but suddenly I commenced to understand."

"The subject of one of Brother Clayton's lessons in early March 1930 was patriarchal blessings. 'I had never really understood patriarchal blessings, but now they had meaning,' Howard wrote. 'That day I went to see Brother

George T. Wride, the stake patriarch, and he asked me to come to the office in the mission home behind the Adams Ward Chapel the next Sunday.'

"That March Sunday, after talking with Howard for a few minutes, Brother Wride laid his hands on the young man's head and gave him a patriarchal blessing.

"The blessing stated that Howard was one 'whom the Lord foreknew,' and that he had shown 'strong leadership among the hosts of heaven' and had been ordained 'to perform an important work in mortality in bringing to pass [the Lord's] purposes with relation to His chosen people.' He was promised that if he remained faithful, he would have showered upon him 'intelligence from on high,' he would be 'a master of worldly skill and a teacher of worldly wisdom as well as a priest of the most high God,' and he would use his talents in serving the Church, would sit in its councils, and would be known for his wisdom and righteous judgments" (Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter*, 70–71).

## He Married Clara Jeffs [14.10]

A friend introduced Howard W. Hunter to a young lady at a young adult dance in California on June 8, 1928.

"Her name was Clara (Claire) Jeffs. Attracted to her at once, Howard said to Claire: 'Why don't you ever go out with me?' She said, 'Why don't you ask me?' Soon she and Howard began dating. They became engaged early in 1931 and were married [in the Salt Lake Temple] on June 10 that year" (Faust, "The Way of an Eagle," 7).



Clara May Jeffs as a teenager

"As his wedding day approached, Howard made another major decision. For several years he had played with orchestras at dances and parties, in public ballrooms, and on radio and the stage. 'It was glamorous in some respects,' he reflected, 'and I made good money, but the association with many of the musicians was not enjoyable because of their drinking and moral standards.' Such associa-

tions were not compatible with the lifestyle he envisioned with a wife and family, so he decided to give up professional music.



Howard and Claire Hunter

"On June 6, 1931, four days before their wedding, Howard played his last engagement at the Virginia Ballroom in Huntington Park. After he got home that night, he packed up his saxophones and clarinets and his music and put them away. He had already sold his drums and marimba and packed up his trumpet and violin.

"‘Since that night,’ he said, ‘I have never touched my musical instruments except on a few occasions, when the children were home, [and] we sang Christmas

carols and I accompanied on the clarinet. Although this left a void of something I had enjoyed, the decision has never been regretted’" (Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter*, 81).

### Early Married Life Was Sweet [14.11]

"Howard and Claire began married life in a furnished apartment overlooking the ocean at Hermosa Beach [in California]. Each morning, he recalled, ‘we were up early. I put on my swimming trunks, ran across the beach, and dived into the breakers. After a vigorous swim and a warm shower, breakfast was ready. It took only fifteen minutes to drive to the bank in Hawthorne and I was ready for the day’s work. We often went swimming together in the evening after I got home, and we usually walked down the beach under the stars before we went to bed. Even though the days were warm, the sea breeze made the evenings cool and comfortable, and the pounding surf was a lullaby.’

"When they rented the apartment, he said, they knew they couldn’t afford to live there long—‘but we wanted the luxury of a nice place to start our marriage.’



Howard W. Hunter with his wife, Claire, and their sons Richard and John

"Soon afterwards they moved to a three-room unfurnished house within walking distance of the bank at Hawthorne. Claire had a bedroom suite and they bought a few other furniture and household items, but they were determined . . . not to go into debt. ‘For this reason we didn’t have all the things we wanted, but we had what we needed to make us comfortable,’ Howard said" (Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter*, 83).



Howard and Claire Hunter

### He Was Interested in Law [14.12]

"After the bank where he worked went out of business [during the Great Depression], 24-year-old Howard sold soap door to door, helped in road surveying, and painted bridges.

"In 1934 a major development occurred for him when he obtained work in the title department of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District. He learned that he had an aptitude for understanding legal work, and at age 26 he made a momentous decision to study law. After taking prerequisite classes, he entered Southwestern University law school, from which he graduated four years later while working full-time, taking classes at night, and welcoming three babies into the family" (Jay M. Todd, "President Howard W. Hunter: Fourteenth President of the Church," *Ensign*, July 1994, 6).

"It was a momentous decision for the Hunters when Howard decided to go to law school. . . . ‘I worked eight hours a day and took most of my classes at night. I did my studying at night and over the weekend,’ President Hunter recalls. At first, he would study until two in the morning. Then he found it was less taxing if he went to bed earlier and got up at two in the morning to study.

"It was, he says, a period of rigorous training that helped him learn the discipline required to handle the demands of a career, Church work, and family life. He graduated *cum laude*" (Searle, "President Hunter, Acting President," 23).

One week after graduating third in his class, he began preparing for the California bar exam. He was informed that only one in three participants would pass the exam.

"Howard took the examination, 'one of the most grueling experiences of my life,' October 23, 24, and 25 [1939]. 'After the third day I was completely exhausted. I had done my best but there was the anxiety of not knowing whether or not that was good enough.'

"The wait seemed interminable, for 'several years of intense work was all focused on the results of one single event.' He knew that if he received a thin letter, it meant he had not passed the examination. A thick letter would include not only a letter with the happy news that he had passed, but also several application forms for admission to the bar and the courts.

"It was on the morning of December 12 that Claire called me at the office and said the postman had just brought a letter from the Committee of Bar Examiners,' he recalled. 'Is it a thick or a thin letter?' I asked. 'A fat one,' she replied. I felt a surge of blood to my head and I closed my eyes and waited for her to open and read the letter. The hard work and the sacrifices we had made were at a successful conclusion.' And his professor was right: Of 718 who took the examination that session, 254, or 35.4 percent, passed. Nearly two-thirds failed" (Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter*, 93).



Howard W. Hunter with his wife Claire and his son John at the Taj Mahal, in India, 1958



The stake presidency of the Pasadena California Stake (early 1950s)

## He Was Called to Be a Bishop and Then a Stake President [14.13]

In August 1940, Bertrum M. Jones, president of the Pasadena Stake, called Howard W. Hunter to serve as bishop of the new El Sereno Ward. "Howard was stunned. 'I had always thought of a bishop as being an older man,' he recalled, 'and I asked how I could be the father of the ward at the young age of thirty-two. They said I would be the youngest bishop that had been called in Southern California to that time, but they knew I could be equal to the assignment. I expressed my appreciation for their confidence and told them I would do my best.'

"Still shocked, he went home and shared the news with Claire. 'We recalled the decision we made to get married instead of going on a mission, and that someday we would fill a mission together,' he said. 'Perhaps this was that mission in a different form than what we had expected'" (Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter*, 94).

Nearly 10 years later, "in February 1950, Elders Stephen L. Richards and Harold B. Lee were assigned to divide the Pasadena Stake, and they called **Howard W. Hunter** to be the president of the Pasadena Stake. He had no hesitation accepting this call. A meticulous journal keeper since his youth, he wrote this response: 'I could well understand the comments of the brethren when they told us we had been selected because of the strength of our wives. Claire . . . always stood close by with support and understanding during the years in law school, while I served as bishop, and in every office I have held'" (Faust, "The Way of an Eagle," 8).

## He Was Called to Be an Apostle [14.14]

"A dramatic change occurred in the life of Howard W. Hunter on October 9, 1959. He and Claire had gone to Salt Lake City to attend the October general conference, and Howard received a note saying President David O. McKay would like to visit with him. President McKay informed him: 'Tomorrow you're going to be sustained as a member of the Council of the Twelve' (Faust, "The Way of an Eagle," 8–9).



Elder Howard W. Hunter

In his account of the experience, **Elder Hunter** wrote:

"President McKay greeted me with a pleasant smile and a warm handshake and then said to me, 'Sit down, President Hunter, I want to talk with you. The Lord has spoken. You are called to be one of his special witnesses, and tomorrow you will be sustained as a member of the Council of the Twelve.'

"I cannot attempt to explain the feeling that came over me. Tears came to my eyes and I could not speak. I have never felt so completely humbled as when I sat in the presence of this great, sweet, kindly man—the prophet of the Lord. He told me what a great joy this would bring into my life, the wonderful association with the brethren, and that hereafter my life and time would be devoted as a servant of the Lord and that I would hereafter belong to the Church and the whole world. He said other things to me but I was so overcome I can't remember the details, but I do remember he put his arms around me and

assured me that the Lord would love me and I would have the sustaining confidence of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve.

"The interview lasted only a few minutes, and as I left I told him I loved the Church, that I sustained him and the other members of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve, and I would gladly give my time, my life, and all that I possessed to this service. He told me I could call Sister Hunter and tell her. . . . I went back to the Hotel Utah and called Claire in Provo, but when she answered the phone I could hardly talk" (quoted in Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter*, 144–45).

"After his name had been presented in general conference and he had been sustained, President Clark invited him to take his place with the Twelve on the stand. He recalled, 'My heart increased its pounding as I climbed the steps. Elder Hugh B. Brown moved over to make room for me and I took my place as the twelfth member of the Quorum. I felt the eyes of everyone fastened upon me as well as the weight of the world on my shoulders. As the conference proceeded I was most uncomfortable and wondered if I could ever feel that this was my proper place'" (Faust, "The Way of an Eagle," 9).

## He Expressed His Feelings about Being an Apostle [14.15]

"Elder Hunter has never ceased to marvel at the privilege he has had each week to meet with the First Presidency and the Twelve in the temple to partake of the sacrament, petition the Lord in prayer, and discuss the affairs of the Lord's kingdom. 'The meeting of this council in the temple is an experience which makes one feel he should be better and do better,' he wrote in 1967. 'There is kindness, unity and love.'

"Many such expressions are tempered with feelings of wonder at being so blessed, such as these: 'Sitting with this group of my brethren makes me feel my inadequacies, but always brings a resolution to try harder.' 'Times like these make me feel my own insignificance and unworthiness to be allowed such privileges and blessings.' 'These meetings are highlights in my life and always leave me with the question as to why I was selected and why I am privileged to sit in this council.' 'I left the temple today, as I have on previous occasions, feeling my inadequacies and wondering why I was selected for this association. I always resolve to attempt to do better and strive to be the example of what is expected'" (Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter*, 226–27).



Elder and Sister Hunter with their first grandson, Robert Mark Hunter, child of Lourine and John Hunter, October 1959

## He Taught about True Religion [14.16]

**Elder Howard W. Hunter** explained:

“There is a great difference between ethics and religion. There is a distinction between one whose life is based on mere ethics and one who lives a truly religious life. We have a need for ethics, but true religion includes the



With Elder Boyd K. Packer

truths of ethics and goes far beyond. True religion has its roots in the belief in a supreme being. Christian religion is based upon a belief in God the Eternal Father and in his Son Jesus Christ and in the word of the Lord as contained in scripture. Religion also goes beyond theology. It is more than just a belief in Deity; it is the practice of the belief. . . .

“True religion to the Christian is demonstrated by a real belief in God and the realization that we are responsible to him for our acts and conduct. A person who lives such religion is willing to live the principles of the gospel of Christ and walk uprightly before the Lord in all things according to his revealed law. This brings to a man or a woman a sense of peace and freedom from confusion in life and gives an assurance of eternal life hereafter” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1969, 112).

## He Traveled the World in His Apostolic Calling [14.17]

One duty of an Apostle is to take the gospel to the world, and Elder Howard W. Hunter traveled the world meeting with the Saints in many lands. He traveled more than two dozen times to the Holy Land conducting business for the Church and helped establish friendships with both Jewish and Arab leaders throughout the Middle East. These friendships eventually helped the Church secure permission to build the Jerusalem Center. He loved to travel to the Holy Land with other members of the Twelve and renew friendships with those he knew. By 1993 he had visited almost every major Islamic nation in the world. He often reminded the Saints that the Jews and the Arabs are both children of promise and that they should not take sides.

“Heavenly gifts and attributes were honed as he went time, time, and time again to Jerusalem in the Holy Land. Jerusalem was like a magnet to him. His leadership in acquiring the land and building the Jerusalem

Center of Brigham Young University was truly inspired. His desire to be where the Savior walked and taught seemed insatiable. He loved all the sights and the sounds. He especially loved the Galilee. But he loved one place most of all. He would *always* say, ‘Let’s go to the Garden Tomb just once more, for old time’s sake.’ There he would sit and meditate as though he were piercing the veil between himself and the Savior” (James E. Faust, “Howard W. Hunter: Man of God,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1995, 27).

## His Love of the Holy Land Led to Special Assignments [14.18]

In 1961 **Elder Howard W. Hunter**, along with **Elder Spencer W. Kimball** and their wives, went on a trip to Egypt and the Middle East. In a letter to their associates in the Quorum of the Twelve, the two Apostles wrote:

“We were in Bethlehem on Christmas Eve where Christ was born. There were some 20,000 others there from every land and of every color, race, language and creed. But when we went down to Shepherds’ Field, we were all alone in the dark. That is, it would have been dark but for the bright moonlight and the starry sky. We sang softly to ourselves: ‘Far, far away on Judea’s plains, shepherds of old heard the joyous strains: Glory to God in the highest.’ Here no mosques nor cathedrals marred the scene and we felt a sweet spirit and could well believe that few changes had taken place here since the holy night. . . .

“... In and around and through Jerusalem we visited most of the traditional places.

“We four walked the few miles from Bethany up to the Mount of Olives and down into Jerusalem—the path He followed so many times. We climbed the hill which could well be Calvary—Golgotha, and sat and lingered to read of the cruel arrest, trial, persecution and crucifixion of our Savior.



Teaching in the Holy Land

“We went with the sorrowing crowd down the hill and spent considerable time in the tomb and the garden which are claimed to be the excavated places. We had a good spiritual warm feeling here. We felt sure it could well be the authentic place. And the Gospels had a new meaning as we read them on the spot.

“And from the Mt. of Olives we read of the ascension. This was a



Elder Hunter meets with Teddy Kolleck, mayor of Jerusalem, at the Orson Hyde Memorial Garden dedication, 1979

glorious experience. . . . We believe these travels will have made us more aware of the realness of the past; the relationship of the past to the present; and our debt to our Lord whose life and death and sacrifice seem even more real" (quoted in Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter*, 163–64).

"In the Middle East, Elder Hunter met heads of state and other government leaders, yet he also conversed with camel drivers and servants. He was entertained in palaces and in Bedouin tents; rode in limousines and on mules and camels; ate sumptuous meals and simple peasant food. He related to individuals in all walks of life because of his genuine interest in people. He attended lectures and read extensively about the Middle East, and his knowledge of these countries opened doors and resulted in valuable friendships for the Church. . . .

"As a result of Elder Hunter's understanding of this special place, the First Presidency assigned him to spearhead two significant undertakings of the Church in the Holy Land: the Orson Hyde Memorial Garden and the Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies" (Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter*, 210–12).

## The Orson Hyde Memorial Garden Was Constructed [14.19]

"On October 24, 1841, Elder Orson Hyde of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was in Palestine, as the Holy Land was then known, on a special mission for the Church. . . . As he stood on the [Mount of Olives,] across the Kidron Valley from Jerusalem, he offered a prayer, dedicating the land of Palestine for the building up of Jerusalem and the gathering of Abraham's posterity.

"On October 24, 1979, President Spencer W. Kimball stood on that same hill to dedicate a memorial garden commemorating Elder Hyde's prayer. Elder Howard W. Hunter was present on that occasion, having taken a major role in raising funds and in the negotiations leading to the construction of the garden.

"Groundwork for this project was laid when President Harold B. Lee, Elder Gordon B. Hinckley of the Twelve, and President Edwin Q. Cannon Jr. of the Swiss Mission visited Israel in September 1972. They met with representatives of the Israeli ministries of religion, foreign affairs, and tourism, and explored the possibility of a monument to Orson Hyde in Jerusalem.

“Three months later, on December 19, 1972, **Elder Hunter** wrote in his journal: ‘Because I am going to the Holy Land next week, the First Presidency called me to their meeting this morning and asked if I would meet with the group leader [for the Church] in Jerusalem and with the mayor, if necessary, regarding a monument to the prayer of Orson Hyde in Jerusalem.’

“In Jerusalem on New Year’s Day, Elder and Sister Hunter looked at possible sites for the monument. He reported to President Lee on his impressions of the sites visited, but nothing was decided at that time. Two years later, the City of Jerusalem invited the Church to participate in a green-belt park development surrounding the walls of the Holy City. After a visit to Jerusalem, Elder Hunter reported that the proposed site, located on the Mount of Olives, would be the largest single tract in the park. Thus the Orson Hyde Memorial Garden began to be a reality” (Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter*, 212–13).

### “All Are Alike unto God” [14.20]

During the time the Church was engaged in the Orson Hyde Memorial Garden project, **Elder Howard W. Hunter** taught:

“As members of the Lord’s church, we need to lift our vision beyond personal prejudices. We need to discover the supreme truth that indeed our Father is no respecter of persons. Sometimes we unduly offend brothers and sisters of other nations by assigning exclusiveness to one nationality of people over another.

“Let me cite, as an example of exclusiveness, the present problem in the Middle East—the conflict between the Arabs and the Jews. . . .



With Elders James E. Faust (third from right) and Jeffrey R. Holland (far right) and family members at the Garden Tomb, May 1985

“We have members of the Church in the Muslim world. . . . Sometimes they are offended by members of the Church who give the impression that we favor only the aims of the Jews. The Church has an interest in all of Abraham’s descendants, and we should remember that the history of the Arabs goes back to Abraham through his son Ishmael.

“Imagine a father with many sons, each having different temperaments, aptitudes, and spiritual traits. Does he love one son less than another? Perhaps the son who is least spiritually inclined has the father’s attention, prayers, and pleadings more than the others. Does that mean he loves the others less? Do you imagine our Heavenly Father loving one nationality of his offspring more exclusively than others? As members of the Church, we need to be reminded of Nephi’s challenging question: ‘Know ye not that there are more nations than one?’ (2 Nephi 29:7).

“At the present time we are engaged in a project of beautifying the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem by a garden, in memory of Orson Hyde, an early apostle of the Church, and the dedicatory prayer he offered on that site. It is not because we favor one people over another. Jerusalem is sacred to the Jews, but it is also sacred to the Arabs.

“A cabinet minister of Egypt once told me that if a bridge is ever to be built between Christianity and Islam it must be built by the Mormon Church. In making inquiry as to the reason for his statement I was impressed by his recitation of the similarities and the common bonds of brotherhood.

“Both the Jews and the Arabs are children of our Father. They are both children of promise, and as a church we do not take sides. We have love for and an interest in each” (“‘All Are Alike unto God,’” 1979 *Devotional Speeches of the Year* [1980], 35–36).

### The Jerusalem Center Was Built [14.21]

“While plans were proceeding on the Orson Hyde project in Jerusalem, Elder Hunter was also searching and negotiating for a site for a center to house the Brigham Young University semester-abroad program and the Jerusalem branch and district of the Church.

“However, finding a suitable site, coming up with a suitable architectural plan, and negotiating the way through countless bureaucratic requirements would not be easy. . . .

"The search for a site began in earnest in 1979, when the Orson Hyde Memorial Garden was nearing completion. On February 8, 1979, Elder Hunter met with a group of General Authorities and BYU officials to determine if the Church should consider building in Jerusalem.

"Two months later Elder Hunter, Elder James E. Faust, and Church Commissioner of Education Jeffrey R. Holland met with the First Presidency and, Elder Hunter wrote, 'recommended the purchase of land in Jerusalem and the construction of a building for a branch chapel, . . . also housing and classrooms for the BYU studies-abroad program.' The proposal was approved, and Elder Hunter was 'authorized to seek out and negotiate for a parcel of property.

"That decision set in motion countless meetings, telephone calls, and trips to Israel, as Elder Hunter learned about Israel's complex laws governing transfer of property and other requirements that must be met before construction could start. . . .

"The site the Church favored was one that President Kimball had visited when he was in Jerusalem to dedicate the Orson Hyde gardens. Owned by the Israeli government, it was on the Mount of Olives, adjacent to Hebrew University's Mount Scopus campus and near the site of a proposed Israeli Supreme Court building. . . .

"Finally, in January 1981 Elder Hunter received word that the registration of Brigham Young University in Israel had been approved, paving the way for the acquisition of land there. Four months later the Israel Lands Authority agreed to lease to BYU approximately five acres of the land the Church had sought, for a term of forty-nine years with an option to renew for an additional forty-nine years. . . .

"After nearly three years of negotiations and lengthy reviews, David Galbraith [who was called by President Harold B. Lee in 1972 to be the first branch president in Israel] called Elder Hunter on September 27, 1983, and told him that the plans had been approved by the Jerusalem District Council. . . .

"But that did not end the problems in getting the center built. Though the Church's intention to build an educational center had been posted much earlier, opposition by both Jews and Arabs escalated dramatically as soon as construction work began at the site. 'The Jews have a fear that our presence in Jerusalem is a means of proselyting, and the Arabs are concerned because we are building on what they consider to be occupied land,' Elder Hunter reported to the First Presidency after a trip to Jerusalem in February 1985 to try to defuse the opposition.

"Articles in Jerusalem newspapers called on the Knesset to rescind permission to proceed with the project, and



The BYU Jerusalem Center

protestors increased their pressure on public officials and threatened violence at the construction site. . . .

"The issue of proselyting was central to the position of the Jews. The Church had agreed, as a condition for building in Jerusalem, not to engage in proselyting, a position reiterated in a *Church News* article in which a Church spokesman pointed out, 'Where missionary work is against the law, we don't do it' [*Church News*, July 28, 1985, 4]. However, the protestors refused to accept this assurance, and the controversy continued to rage.

"Meanwhile, construction of the center moved ahead. Elder Hunter and Elder Faust flew to Jerusalem again in May 1986. 'The afternoon [of May 21] was spent touring the building,' Elder Hunter wrote. 'The heavy construction work is nearly all completed and by October the student quarters will be ready for occupancy. . . . We have delivered to each of the 120 members of the Knesset a copy of a letter signed by 154 members of the U.S. Congress from both parties making a joint appeal to allow the completion of the BYU Center for Near Eastern Studies in Jerusalem'" (Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter*, 215–20).

The Israeli cabinet gave permission for the center to proceed. In March 1987 students moved into the center while it was still under construction and a lease was signed in May 1988. President Hunter dedicated the center on May 16, 1989.

## He Taught about Developing Spirituality [14.22]

**Elder Howard W. Hunter** said:

"Developing spirituality and attuning ourselves to the highest influences of godliness is not an easy matter. It takes time and frequently involves a struggle. It will not happen by chance, but is accomplished only through

deliberate effort and by calling upon God and keeping his commandments. . . .

“Part of our difficulty as we strive to acquire spirituality is the feeling that there is much to do and that we are falling far short. Perfection is something yet ahead for every one of us; but we can capitalize on our strengths, begin where we are, and seek after the happiness that can be found in pursuing the things of God. . . .

“None of us has attained perfection or the zenith of spiritual growth that is possible in mortality. Every person can and must make spiritual progress. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the divine plan for that spiritual growth eternally. It is more than a code of ethics. It is more than an ideal social order. It is more than positive thinking about self-improvement and determination. The gospel is the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ with his priesthood and sustenance and with the Holy Spirit. With faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and obedience to his gospel, a step at a time improving as we go, pleading for strength, improving our attitudes and our ambitions, we will find ourselves successfully in the fold of the Good Shepherd. That will require discipline and training and exertion and strength. But as the Apostle Paul said, ‘I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.’ (Philip. 4:13)” (“Developing Spirituality,” *Ensign*, May 1979, 25–26).

## He Was Well Fed by the Saints [14.23]

**Elder Howard W. Hunter** traveled many places throughout the world and faced a variety of challenges. He wrote about one surprising challenge that he faced as a General Authority:

“It’s almost impossible for General Authorities of the Church to keep slender. Every weekend we stay at the home of a stake president, and his wife always goes



Helping with Christmas dinner, 1983

to every effort to cook, bake and spread the table with an abundance of everything. I never object because I have no dislikes—there is nothing I don’t enjoy. Most people like baked ham and fried chicken and so do I, but recently I have had so much that I can’t look a pig or chicken squarely in the eye without a guilty feeling for the dislike I feel is commencing to creep in. . . .

“I am grateful for the wonderful people with whom we stay each weekend and I appreciate their goodness to us, but as I passed [a hamburger restaurant] on the way home, I thought, ‘Wouldn’t a hamburger and a malt make a wonderful banquet?’” (Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter*, 172–73).



He enjoyed visiting the sites of Mesoamerica and made a number of trips to those areas.

## He Was Interested in South and Central American Archaeology [14.24]

Elder Howard W. Hunter had a deep love of the Book of Mormon and for its divine mission. He was also interested in the historical and archeological details it contained. On January 26, 1961, he was appointed the chairman of an advisory board for the New World Archaeological Foundation (NAAF). He served as chairman for 24 years. This organization associated with BYU-sponsored archaeological work in southern Mexico and northern Central America. “Its goal was to search for sites connected with the descendants of Lehi. Some of these sites were very primitive, and his assignment literally took him into the jungle. Elder Hunter learned

to survive such conditions by eating boiled eggs and bananas” (Faust, “The Way of an Eagle,” 10).

“Elder Hunter took an active interest in the foundation, meeting often with board members and personally inspecting the archaeological sites two or three times a year. He also took a strong fatherly interest in the staff workers and their families. His expeditions, often combined with Church assignments, took him into primitive—at times even dangerous—areas, and he immersed himself in learning as much as possible about the ancient civilizations and artifacts” (Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter*, 198–99).

### He Set a New Record [14.25]

During a trip to Mexico in November 1975, Elder Howard W. Hunter established a record thus far unequaled in the history of the Church. “Assisted by Elder J. Thomas Fyans, who was then serving as an Assistant to the Twelve, Elder Hunter had been assigned to realign several stakes in Mexico. After meeting with the regional representatives and the mission president and reviewing information provided by the stake presidents, he determined that the 5 existing stakes, together with some branches from the Mexico City Mission, should be made into 15 stakes.

“‘Our purpose,’ he wrote in his journal, ‘was to reduce the size of the stakes, to better align them, to reduce travel of members, and also to provide for the rapid growth that is taking place in Mexico. It was the consensus that smaller stakes can be better trained, that leadership can be more effective, and the anticipated growth of about 1,000 members commencing by March will be better fellow-shipped’” (Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter*, 202).

### His Wife Died [14.26]

Since the early 1970s, Elder Howard W. Hunter’s wife, Claire, had suffered serious health problems. “In May 1981, Claire suffered a cerebral hemorrhage. The doctors’ prognosis: she probably would not be able to walk again. When she was released from the hospital two and a half weeks later, she was in a wheelchair, still unable to walk. Two weeks later Howard wrote hopefully, ‘Although the doctors have said she would not be able to walk again, she is now able to stand if she is supported, and this morning by [my] holding her hands and leading her, she was able to walk from the bedroom to the kitchen.’

“Dorothy Nielsen, Howard and Claire’s dear friend and neighbor across the street, remembers being present when Howard returned home from the office or a trip. He would help Claire to her feet from her wheelchair



Claire Hunter

and, supporting her tightly, whirl her around the room just as he had done when they went dancing so many years before. He took her regularly to her favorite hair dresser for permanents and shampoos, and even though she couldn’t communicate, he would talk to her and tell her about his day and share news with her about family and friends” (Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter*, 267–68).

“In 1983 his beloved wife, Clara Jeffs Hunter, passed away. . . . President Hunter [had] tended to her needs, providing loving care with respect and an uncommon devotion for many years, with a complete disregard for his own health. But there was a reward, for as diminished as she was, Claire would smile and respond only to him. The tenderness so evident in their communication was heartrending. We have never seen such an example of devotion of a husband to his wife. Theirs was a many-splendid love affair. Love is service” (Faust, “The Way of an Eagle,” 10).

### He Spoke to Concerned Parents [14.27]

**Elder Howard W. Hunter** taught consoling doctrine to parents who felt discouraged because of wayward children:

“There are many in the Church and in the world who are living with feelings of guilt and unworthiness because some of their sons and daughters have wandered or strayed from the fold. . . .

“At the outset we understand that conscientious parents try their best, yet nearly all have made mistakes. One does not launch into such a project as parenthood without soon realizing that there will be many errors along the way. Surely our Heavenly Father knows, when he entrusts his spirit children into the care of young and inexperienced parents, that there will be mistakes and errors in judgment. . . .

“What more challenging responsibility is there than working effectively with young people? There are numerous variables that determine the character and the personality of a child. It is probably true that parents are, in many or perhaps most cases, the greatest influence in shaping the life of a child, but sometimes there are other influences that also are very significant. . . .

“... Remember that ours was not the only influence that contributed to the actions of our children, whether those actions were good or bad. . . .

“Know that our Heavenly Father will recognize the love and the sacrifice, the worry and the concern, even though our great effort has been unsuccessful. Parents’ hearts are oftentimes broken, yet they must realize that the ultimate responsibility lies with the child after parents have taught correct principles. . . .

“A successful parent is one who has loved, one who has sacrificed, and one who has cared for, taught, and ministered to the needs of a child. If you have done all of these and your child is still wayward or troublesome or worldly, it could well be that you are, nevertheless, a successful parent. Perhaps there are children who have come into the world that would challenge any set of parents under any set of circumstances. Likewise, perhaps there are others who would bless the lives of, and be a joy to, almost any father or mother.

“My concern today is that there are parents who may be pronouncing harsh judgments upon themselves and may be allowing these feelings to destroy their lives, when in fact they have done their best and should continue in faith” (“Parents’ Concern for Children,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1983, 63–65).



He often spoke of parent-child relationships.

## We All Face Adversity in Our Lives [14.28]

Trials were a part of **Howard W. Hunter’s** life. He learned much by staying faithful during his times of difficulty. His experience assisted him in teaching the Saints: “We will all have some adversity in our lives. I think we can be reasonably sure of that. Some of it will have the potential to be violent and damaging and destructive. Some of it may even strain our faith in a loving God who has the power to administer relief in our behalf.

“To those anxieties I think the Father of us all would say, ‘Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?’ And of course that has to be faith for the whole journey, the entire experience, the fulness of our life, not simply around the bits and pieces and tempestuous moments. . . .

“... Jesus was not spared grief and pain and anguish and buffeting. . . .

“Peace was on the lips and in the heart of the Savior no matter how fiercely the tempest was raging. May it so be with us—in our own hearts, in our own homes, in our nations of the world, and even in the buffetings faced from time to time by the Church. We should not expect to get through life individually or collectively without some opposition” (“Master, the Tempest Is Raging,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 34–35).



President Howard W. Hunter

## He Became President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles [14.29]

“On Friday, May 20, 1988, Marion G. Romney, president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, died at his home in Salt Lake City. Thirteen days later, at the weekly temple meeting on June 2, Howard W. Hunter was sustained and set apart as president of the Twelve.

“Though it had been one year since his back surgery and he was still struggling to regain the use of his legs, President Hunter was determined to let nothing deter him from fulfilling his responsibilities in presiding over the quorum. Having served as acting president of the quorum for more than thirty months, he was well aware of what those responsibilities were” (Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter*, 287).

## We Ought to Know the Scriptures [14.30]

Studying the scriptures was one of **President Howard W. Hunter’s** great loves. He taught:

“We ought to have a church full of women and men who know the scriptures thoroughly, who cross-reference and mark them, who develop lessons and talks from the Topical Guide, and who have mastered the maps, the Bible Dictionary, and the other helps that are contained in this wonderful set of standard works. . . .

“Not in this dispensation, surely not in *any* dispensation, have the scriptures—the enduring, enlightening word of God—been so readily available and so helpfully structured for the use of every man, woman, and child who will search them. The written word of God is in the most



Speaking at general conference

readable and accessible form ever provided to lay members in the history of the world. Surely we will be held accountable if we do not read them" (*Eternal Investments* [address to religious educators, Feb. 10, 1989], 2–3).

## We Should Center Our Lives on Christ [14.31]

**President Howard W. Hunter** loved the Savior and often taught the Saints to follow the Lord's teachings and example in their lives: "Please remember this one thing. If our lives and our faith are centered upon Jesus Christ and his restored gospel, nothing can ever go permanently wrong. On the other hand, if our lives are not centered on the Savior and his teachings, no other success can ever be permanently right" ("Fear Not, Little Flock," *Brigham Young University 1988–89 Devotional and Fireside Speeches* [1989], 112).

## He Married Inis Bernice Egan [14.32]

Almost seven years after his wife died, President Howard W. Hunter had a surprise announcement to make to his Brethren of the Twelve. "Near the end of the Twelve's meeting on Thursday, April [12], 1990, after all agenda items had been covered, President Hunter asked, 'Does anyone have anything that is not on the agenda?' Having been forewarned privately that their president had something he wanted to bring up if there was time at the end of their meeting, none of those present said anything. 'Well, then,' he continued, 'if no one else has anything



President Hunter and Inis Bernice Egan were married on April 12, 1990.

to say, I thought I'd just let you know that I'm going to be married this afternoon.'

"... Then President Hunter, in his very modest way, explained, 'Inis Stanton is an old acquaintance from California. I've been visiting with her for some time, and I've decided to be married.' ...

"At two o'clock that Thursday afternoon, Howard W. Hunter and Inis Bernice Egan Stanton knelt at the altar in one of the sealing rooms of the temple, and President Hinckley performed the sealing ceremony and pronounced them husband and wife" (Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter*, 291–92).

On his wedding anniversary two years later, President Hunter wrote in his journal that the last two years had been happy ones. Inis had traveled extensively around the world with him, and he commented on how she made their home a delight. President Boyd K. Packer shared an experience that further illustrates his love for his wife:

"Three days before President Hunter's passing, Elder Russell M. Nelson and I visited with the President. He was seated in the sunroom which overlooks the temple and the gardens. We knelt before him, each holding one of his hands. As we talked with him, he kept looking over his shoulder into the living room and then called to his wife, Inis.

"Ever present and ever attentive, she responded immediately and asked what he needed. He said, 'You are too far away; I want you close to me.' I said, 'President, she was only thirty feet away.' He said, 'I know, that's too far'" ("President Howard W. Hunter—He Endured to the End," *Ensign*, Apr. 1995, 30).

## He Had Faith to Walk Again [14.33]

In a 1991 general conference address, Elder Rulon G. Craven spoke of President Howard W. Hunter's determination to walk again:

"Many will remember a number of years ago President Hunter was informed that he would not walk again. However, his faith and determination was greater than that message. Daily, without fanfare and the knowledge of others, he went through some very strenuous physical therapy exercises with determination, faith, and the vision that he would walk again. During those difficult months, his Brethren of the Twelve were praying for him daily in their quorum meetings and in their private prayers.

"Months later, on a Thursday morning, I went to President Hunter's office to discuss an agenda item for the temple meeting that morning. I found he left early and was informed that he was walking to the temple. I



President Hunter was told he might never walk again.

questioned that information and then hurried to catch up with him. When I caught up with him, he was walking with the help of a walker. We walked together to the elevator and then up to the fourth floor. We went down the hall to the upper room of the temple. When their president walked into that room, the Twelve stood and began to clap their hands. They tenderly watched him walk over to his chair and let his body down into the chair. Then with magnificent love, honor, and tenderness, each of the Twelve went up to him and extended to him an affectionate touch, kiss on the forehead, and a hug, showing their great love and admiration for him. They all sat down, and President Hunter thanked them and said, 'I was not supposed to walk again, but with the Lord's help and my determination and, most important, the faith of my Brethren of the Twelve, I am walking again.' President Howard W. Hunter is an example of maintaining faith and determination in the face of adversity" ("Prophets," *Ensign*, May 1991, 28–29).

**Elder James E. Faust**, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote of how President Hunter kept his sense of humor during his health challenges:

"When it was difficult for him to walk or even stand, he surprised the congregation in general conference by addressing them from a wheelchair. His gentle humor shines through the opening sentences: 'Forgive me if I remain seated while I present these few remarks. It is not by choice that I speak from a wheelchair. I notice that the rest of you seem to enjoy the conference sitting down, so I will follow your example' [*Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 54].

"In April 1988, with the aid of a walker, he stood at the pulpit to deliver his conference message. Near the middle of the talk he lost his balance and fell backwards. President Monson, Elder Packer, and a security guard

quickly lifted him up on his feet, and he continued his talk as though nothing had happened. At the close of the conference session, with his ever-present sense of humor intact, he said: 'I landed in the flowers!' " ("The Way of an Eagle," *Ensign*, Aug. 1994, 10). At President Hunter's funeral in 1995, President Boyd K. Packer gave further insight: "The television audience did not even know he had fallen. He had broken three ribs in that fall" ("President Hunter—He Endured to the End," 29).

## He Gave Counsel to the Sisters [14.34]

In an address to the women of the Church, **President Hunter** counseled them to stand with the Brethren and to seek service over status:

"As our Lord and Savior needed the women of his time for a comforting hand, a listening ear, a believing heart, a kind look, an encouraging word, loyalty—even in his hour of humiliation, agony, and death—so we, his servants all across the Church, need you, the women of the Church, to stand with us and for us in stemming the tide of evil that threatens to engulf us. Together we must stand faithful and firm in the faith against superior numbers of other-minded people. It seems to me that there is a great need to rally the women of the Church to stand with and for the Brethren in stemming the tide of evil that surrounds us and in moving forward the work of our Savior. Nephi said, 'Ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men, [women, and children].' (2 Ne. 31:20.) Obedient to him we are a majority. But only together can we accomplish the work he has given us to do and be prepared for the day when we shall see him. . . .



Shaking hands with President Ezra Taft Benson

"Sisters, continue to seek opportunities for service. Don't be overly concerned with status. Do you recall the counsel of the Savior regarding those who seek the 'chief seats' or the 'uppermost rooms'? 'He that is greatest among you shall be your servant.' (Matt. 23:6, 11.) It is important to be appreciated. But our focus should be on righteousness, not recognition; on service, not status. The faithful visiting teacher, who quietly goes about her work month after month, is just as important to the work of the Lord as those who occupy what some see as more prominent positions in the Church. Visibility does not equate to value" ("To the Women of the Church," *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 96–97).



President and Sister Hunter with his daughters, October 1994

## He Was Calm When His Life Was Threatened [14.35]

"President Hunter [was] always . . . a man of great resolution. On February 7, 1993, he was on the Brigham Young University campus to speak at a nineteen-stake fireside and Church Educational System broadcast. As President Hunter rose to address the nearly twenty thousand young adults assembled in the Marriott Center, an assailant threatened him, shouting, 'Stop right there!' The man claimed to have a bomb and a detonator and ordered everyone to leave the stand except President



President Howard W. Hunter

Hunter. Many people did leave, yet President Hunter resolutely stayed at the pulpit, with two security guards. Although threatened by what looked like a gun, President Hunter firmly declined to read the written statement the man handed to him. When students spontaneously began to sing 'We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet,' the assailant was momentarily distracted. A security guard rushed him

and took him into custody. Other security guards lowered President Hunter to the floor for safety.

"There was, of course, a considerable commotion in the audience, but soon a reasonable calm returned. After a few moments to collect himself, President Hunter made a second approach to the microphone and read the opening line of his prepared text: 'Life has a fair number of challenges in it.' He stopped, looked over the audience, and added, 'As demonstrated.' Then he went on with his message as though nothing had happened" (Faust, "The Way of an Eagle," 11–12).

He faced a similar threat on another occasion. **President Boyd K. Packer** explained: "We accompanied him to Jerusalem for the dedication of the BYU Center. As I was speaking, there was some excitement in the back of the hall. Men in military uniforms had entered the room. They sent a note to President Hunter. I turned and asked for instructions. He said, 'There's been a bomb threat. Are you afraid?' I said, 'No.' He said, 'Neither am I; finish your talk'" ("President Hunter—He Endured to the End," 29).

## He Became President of the Church [14.36]

On June 5, 1994, **Howard W. Hunter** was ordained and set apart as the 14th president of the Church. He had served for over three decades as a General Authority. During a press conference held the next day, he invited "all members of the Church to live with ever more attention to the life and example of the Lord Jesus Christ, especially the love and hope and compassion He displayed.

"I pray that we might treat each other with more kindness, more courtesy, more humility and patience and forgiveness. We do have high expectations of one another, and all can improve. Our world cries out for more disciplined living of the commandments of God. But the way we are to encourage that, as the Lord told the Prophet Joseph in the wintry depths of Liberty Jail, is 'by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; . . . without hypocrisy, and without guile' (D&C 121:41–42).

"To those who have transgressed or been offended, we say, come back. To those who are hurt and struggling and afraid, we say, let us stand with you and dry your tears. To those who are confused and assailed by error on every side, we say, come to the God of all truth and the Church of continuing revelation. Come back. Stand with us. Carry on. Be believing. All is well, and all will be well. Feast at the table laid before you in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and strive to follow the Good Shepherd

who has provided it. Have hope, exert faith, receive—and give—charity, the pure love of Christ” (quoted in Todd, “President Hunter: Fourteenth President,” 4–5).

Though his service as President of the Church was a short nine months, President Hunter’s example and teachings were endearing to the Saints.



The First Presidency at a press conference: Gordon B. Hinckley, Howard W. Hunter, and Thomas S. Monson

## Every Member Should Be Temple Worthy [14.37]

With his invitation to follow the Savior’s life and example with greater diligence, **President Howard W. Hunter** said:

“I also invite the members of the Church to establish the temple of the Lord as the great symbol of their membership and the supernal setting for their most sacred covenants. It would be the deepest desire of my heart to have every member of the Church be temple worthy. I would hope that every adult member would be worthy of—and carry—a current temple recommend, even if proximity to a temple does not allow immediate or frequent use of it.

“Let us be a temple-attending and a temple-loving people. Let us hasten to the temple as frequently as time and means and personal circumstances allow. Let us go not only for our kindred dead, but let us also go for the personal blessing of temple worship, for the sanctity and safety which is provided within those hallowed and consecrated walls. The temple is a place of beauty, it is a place of revelation, it is a place of peace. It is the house of the Lord. It is holy unto the Lord. It should be holy unto us” (quoted in Todd, “President Hunter: Fourteenth President,” 5).

## He Bore a Strong Witness of Christ [14.38]

During his first general conference address as President of the Church, and what was to be his last general conference, **President Howard W. Hunter** left the Saints with his witness of Jesus Christ and the Church:

“My greatest strength through these past months has been my abiding testimony that this is the work of God and not of men. Jesus Christ is the head of this church. He leads it in word and deed. I am honored beyond expression to be called for a season to be an instrument in his hands to preside over his church. But without the knowledge that Christ is the head of the Church, neither I nor any other man could bear the weight of the calling that has come.

“In assuming this responsibility, I acknowledge God’s miraculous hand in my life. He has repeatedly spared my life and restored my strength, has repeatedly brought me back from the edge of eternity, and has allowed me to continue in my mortal ministry for another season. I have wondered on occasion why my life has been spared. But now I have set that question aside and ask only for the faith and prayers of the members of the Church so we can work together, I laboring with you, to fulfill God’s purposes in this season of our lives” (“Exceeding Great and Precious Promises,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 7).



Participating in graduation exercises in Hawaii

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## Seek a Christlike Life [14.39]

In a Christmas devotional, **President Howard W. Hunter** encouraged people to follow the Savior’s example: “This Christmas, ‘Mend a quarrel. Seek out a forgotten friend. Dismiss suspicion and replace it with trust. Write a letter. Give a soft answer. Encourage youth. Manifest your loyalty in word and deed. Keep a promise. Forgo a grudge. Forgive an enemy. Apologize. Try to understand. Examine your demands on others. Think first of someone else. Be kind. Be gentle. Laugh a little more. Express your gratitude. Welcome a stranger. Gladden the heart of a child. Take pleasure in the beauty and wonder of the earth. Speak your love and then speak it again.’” (Adapted from an unknown author.)” (*The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, ed. Clyde J. Williams [1997], 270–71).

## He Was Paid a Final Tribute [14.40]

President Howard W. Hunter passed away on March 3, 1995. At President Hunter's funeral service, **President Gordon B. Hinckley** said:

"A majestic tree in the forest has fallen, leaving a place of emptiness. A great and quiet strength has departed from our midst.



The First Presidency at the Bountiful Utah Temple dedication

"Much has been said about his suffering. I believe that it went on longer and was more sharp and deep than any of us really knew. He developed a high tolerance for pain and did not complain about it. That he lived so long is a miracle in and of itself. His suffering has comforted and mitigated the pain of many others who suffer. They know that he understood the heaviness of their burdens. He reached out to these with a special kind of love.

"Much has been said about his kindness, his thoughtfulness, his courtesy to others. It is all true. He surrendered himself to the pattern of the Lord whom he loved. He was a quiet and thoughtful man. But he also could be aroused to voice strong and wise opinions. . . .

"Brother Hunter was kind and gentle. But he also could be strong and persuasive in his statements. As has been said, he was trained in the law. He knew how to present a matter. He laid out the various premises in orderly fashion. He moved from these to his conclusion. When he spoke we all listened. His suggestions most often prevailed. But when they were not accepted, he had the flexibility to withdraw his advocacy, to accept the decision of the President of the Church, his prophet, and to thereafter go throughout the Church furthering with conviction the conclusion that was reached and the program determined upon. . . .

"Howard W. Hunter, prophet, seer, and revelator, had a sure and certain testimony of the living reality of God, our Eternal Father. He voiced with great conviction his witness of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of mankind. He spoke with love for the Prophet Joseph Smith, and for all those who succeeded him in the line of succession until President Hunter's own time. . . .

"May God bless his memory to our great good" ("A Prophet Polished and Refined," *Ensign*, Apr. 1995, 33–35).



President Howard W. Hunter





# Gordon B. Hinckley

Fifteenth President of the Church

# 15

## Highlights in the Life of Gordon B. Hinckley

### Age Events

	He was born June 23, 1910, in Salt Lake City, Utah, to Bryant S. and Ada Bitner Hinckley.
8	He was baptized by his father (April 28, 1919).
20	His mother died (Nov. 9, 1930).
21	He graduated from the University of Utah (June 1932).
22–24	He served a mission to the British Isles (1933–35).
24	He was appointed executive secretary of the Church Radio, Publicity, and Mission Literature Committee (1935).
26	He married Marjorie Pay (Apr. 29, 1937).
33	He accepted a position at the Union Depot and Railroad Company in Salt Lake City (1943).
41	He was appointed general secretary of the General Missionary Committee (1951).
42	He was asked by President David O. McKay to prepare the temple presentations in non-English languages (1953).
46	He was called as president of the East Millcreek Stake (Oct. 28, 1956).
47	He was sustained as an Assistant to the Twelve (Apr. 6, 1958).
51	He was ordained an Apostle (Oct. 5, 1961).
71	He was called as a counselor to President Spencer W. Kimball (July 23, 1981).
75	He was called as a counselor to President Ezra Taft Benson (Nov. 10, 1985).
83	He was called as a counselor to President Howard W. Hunter (June 5, 1994).
84	He became President of the Church (Mar. 12, 1995).
85	He read “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” at the General Relief Society meeting (Sept. 23, 1995).
86	He represented the Church on the television news show <i>60 Minutes</i> (broadcast Apr. 1996); he organized additional Quorums of Seventy (increased to five quorums on Apr. 5, 1997).
87	He announced that smaller temples would be built throughout the world (Oct. 1997).
88	He addressed, by satellite, what may have been the largest gathering of missionaries ever convened to that date (Feb. 21, 1999).
89	The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles issued the document “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles” (Jan. 1, 2000); he dedicated the Palmyra New York Temple (Apr. 6, 2000).
90	He dedicated the Conference Center in Salt Lake City, Utah (Oct. 8, 2000); he traveled 250,000 miles, visited 58 countries, spoke to 2.2 million members and dedicated 24 temples (2000); he announced the Perpetual Education Fund to assist young Church members worldwide with their education (Apr. 2001).
92	He dedicated the Nauvoo Illinois Temple (June 27, 2002); he spoke at the first ever Global Leadership Training by satellite broadcast (Jan. 2003)—broadcast in 56 languages and available to 97 percent of priesthood leaders around the world.
93	His wife, Marjorie Pay Hinckley died (Apr. 6, 2004).
95	He traveled 24,995 miles in a tour of Asia and Africa from July to August 2004, visiting Russia, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, India, Kenya, and Nigeria; he was the first Church President to visit India; his trip culminated with the dedication of the Aba Nigeria Temple.
97	He died in Salt Lake City, Utah (Jan. 27, 2008); he was the longest living President of the Church.

## He Descended from a Pioneer Heritage

[15.1]

"President Hinckley's forebear, Thomas Hinckley, served as governor of Plymouth Colony, Massachusetts, from 1681 to 1692. His grandfather, Ira Nathaniel Hinckley, lost his parents and, with his brother, traveled from Michigan to Springfield, Illinois, to live with his grandparents. As a teenager he walked to Nauvoo and met the Prophet Joseph Smith" (Boyd K. Packer, "President Gordon B. Hinckley: First Counselor," *Ensign*, Feb. 1986, 3).



Ira Nathaniel Hinckley, Gordon B. Hinckley's grandfather



Angeline Wilcox Noble Hinckley, Gordon B. Hinckley's grandmother

In 1843, at the age of 14, Ira Nathaniel Hinckley joined the Church, and in 1850 he arrived in the Salt Lake Valley. After settling in Salt Lake City with his family, he went back East on trips to help other Saints migrate west. In 1862 he enlisted in the army to guard the trans-continental telegraph line during the Civil War. In 1867 President Brigham Young sent Ira a letter, asking him to accept a new assignment:

"We wish to get a good and suitable person to settle on and take charge of the Church Ranch at Cove Creek, Millard County. Your name has been suggested for this

position. As it is some distance from any other settlement, a man of sound practical judgment and experience is needed to fill the place. Cove Creek is on the main road to our Dixie, Pahrnagat, and Lower California, some 42 miles south of Fillmore and some 22 miles north of Beaver. If you think you can take this mission, you should endeavor to go south with us. We expect to start a week from next Monday. It is not wisdom for you to take your family there until the fort is built. . . . Should you conclude to go, let us know by the bearer of this letter, and when you start, come with conveyance to accompany us.'

"... Ira sent the courier back with a simple reply: 'Say to the President I will be there on the appointed day with conveyance prepared to go'" (Sheri L. Dew, *Go Forward with Faith: The Biography of Gordon B. Hinckley* [1996], 12).

## His Father Was Strong and Faithful [15.2]

Ira Nathaniel Hinckley left his family in Coalville, Utah, until the fort at Cove Creek was ready to be occupied. While he was away, his wife Angeline Wilcox Noble Hinckley gave birth to a son, Bryant Stringham Hinckley (Gordon B. Hinckley's father), on July 9, 1867. Ira moved his family to Cove Fort in November of 1867, and for the next 17 years they helped travelers passing through the area find shelter, food, and safety.

"Bryant Hinckley's earliest memories were of life at Cove Fort, where he and his brothers learned to ride almost as soon as they learned to walk. Many an afternoon found them atop the fort wall, their field glasses in hand, watching cowboys on fleet-footed ponies corral the wild horses and cattle that roamed the hills to the east. . . .

"In 1883, when Bryant was sixteen, Angeline moved to Provo so that Ira's five oldest sons . . . could attend the Brigham Young Academy. Bryant was at an impressionable age, and the academy opened up a whole new world for the boy from rural Utah. . . .

"Upon graduation, Bryant was offered a teaching position at the academy on the condition that he obtain further training, so he later traveled east to Poughkeepsie, New York, and attended Eastman Business College, from which he graduated in December 1892. He also completed several months of graduate work at Rochester Business University before returning home in the spring of 1893 to teach at the BY Academy and, in June 1893, to marry Christine Johnson" (Dew, *Go Forward with Faith*, 16–18).

In early 1900 Bryant was offered and accepted the position of principal at the new LDS Business College in Salt Lake City. "His instincts for business as well as his skill as a teacher and communicator served the college



Ira Nathaniel Hinckley oversaw the building of Cove Fort in 1867.

well. . . . By the time he left after ten years of service, the school was considered one of the best business colleges in the country” (Dew, *Go Forward with Faith*, 18).

Bryant and Christine Hinckley became the parents of nine children. Tragically, on the same day their fifth child was born, their two-year-old daughter died with a severe fever, and in July 1908, after 15 years of marriage, Christine suddenly became violently ill and was rushed into emergency surgery. All efforts to treat her were futile and she died shortly thereafter. Bryant was overwhelmed. His wife was gone and he was left alone with eight children to care for.

### Birth of Gordon B. Hinckley [15.3]

In time after the death of his wife, Bryant Hinckley felt that his children needed a mother and he needed a companion. At that time he was the principal of the LDS Business College, and on the faculty was a talented teacher named Ada Bitner who taught English and shorthand. After a short courtship, Bryant and Ada were married in the Salt Lake Temple on August 4, 1909.



**Bryant Stringham Hinckley,**  
father of Gordon B. Hinckley



**Ada Bitner Hinckley, mother of**  
Gordon B. Hinckley

“Bryant had been promised in a patriarchal blessing almost fifteen years earlier: ‘You shall not only become great yourself but your posterity will become great, from your loins shall come forth statesmen, prophets, priests and Kings to the most High God. The Priesthood will never depart from your family, no never. To your posterity there shall be no end . . . and the name of Hinckley shall be honored in every nation under heaven.’

“The day Bryant and Ada rejoiced in the arrival of their first son, they couldn’t have foreseen that he would in great measure fulfill that prophecy. Born on June 23, 1910, and given his mother’s maiden name, he would be known as Gordon Bitner Hinckley” (Dew, *Go Forward with Faith*, 22).

### He Learned Lessons in His Youth [15.4]

“A spindly, frail boy susceptible to earaches and other illnesses, Gordon was a constant worry to his mother. In the evening it was common to find Ada warming two small bags of salt, which she would hold against his aching ears. . . .

“Gordon also suffered from allergies, asthma, and hay fever, and the living conditions of the day exacerbated his problems. Nearly everyone in Salt Lake City burned coal in stoves or furnaces, and the resultant soot hung over the city, particularly in the dead of winter, like a suffocating blanket. . . .

“The heavy concentration of soot and other pollutants was Gordon’s nemesis.

At age two he contracted a severe case of whooping cough, threatening enough that a doctor told Ada the only remedy was clear, country air. Bryant responded by purchasing a five-acre farm in the rural East Millcreek area of the Salt Lake Valley and building a small summer home” (Dew, *Go Forward with Faith*, 24–25).

Recalling some lessons he learned during his childhood, **President Gordon B. Hinckley** said:

“In my early childhood, we had a stove in the kitchen and a stove in the dining room. A furnace was later installed, and what a wonderful thing that was. But it had a voracious appetite for coal, and there was no automatic stoker. The coal had to be shoveled into the furnace and carefully banked each night.

“I learned a great lesson from that monster of a furnace: if you wanted to keep warm, you had to work the shovel.

“My father had an idea that his boys ought to learn to work, in the summer as well as in the winter, and so he



**Young Gordon B. Hinckley**



Gordon B. Hinckley (on right) with his brother Sherman, about 1913

bought a five-acre farm, which eventually grew to include more than thirty acres. We lived there in the summer and returned to the city when school started.

"We had a large orchard, and the trees had to be pruned each spring. Father took us to pruning demonstrations put on by experts from the agriculture college. We learned a great truth—that you could pretty well determine the kind of fruit you would

pick in September by the way you pruned in February. The idea was to space the branches so that the fruit would be exposed to sunlight and air. Further, we learned that new, young wood produces the best fruit. That has had many applications in life" ("Some Lessons I Learned as a Boy," *Ensign*, May 1993, 52).

## The Hinckleys Held Family Home Evening [15.5]

**President Gordon B. Hinckley** shared the following insights into his childhood:

"In 1915 President Joseph F. Smith asked the people of the Church to have family home evening. My father said we would do so, that we would warm up the parlor where Mother's grand piano stood and do what the President of the Church had asked.

"We were miserable performers as children. We could do all kinds of things together while playing, but for one of us to try to sing a solo before the others was like asking ice cream to stay hard on the kitchen stove. In the beginning we would laugh and make cute remarks about one another's performance. But our parents persisted. We sang together. We prayed together. We listened quietly while Mother read Bible and



Gordon B. Hinckley, about 12 years old

Book of Mormon stories. Father told us stories out of his memory. . . .

"Out of those simple little meetings, held in the parlor of our old home, came something indescribable and wonderful. Our love for our parents was strengthened. Our love for brothers and sisters was enhanced. Our love for the Lord was increased. An appreciation for simple goodness grew in our hearts. These wonderful things came about because our parents followed the counsel of the President of the Church. I have learned something tremendously significant out of that.

"In that old home we knew that our father loved our mother. That was another of the great lessons of my boyhood. I have no recollection of ever hearing him speak unkindly to her or of her. He encouraged her in her individual Church activities and in neighborhood and civic responsibilities. She had much of native talent, and he encouraged her to use it. Her comfort was his constant concern. We looked upon them as equals, companions who worked together and loved and appreciated one another as they loved us" ("Some Lessons I Learned as a Boy," 54).

## The Hinckley Family Valued Learning in the Home [15.6]

Both of Gordon B. Hinckley's parents were educators, and they wanted to give their children the best opportunities to learn. The family had a room in their home that held more than a thousand books for the family to read.

"Ada had been an exceptional student, and she expected the same of her children. For years Gordon treasured a small Webster's *Handy Dictionary* that carried the inscription, 'Ada Bitner Reward for Excellence, 1889.' Books and education were important to Bryant as well, and he had converted one of the large rooms in their home to a library that could be closed off for studying. Its bookshelves were filled with more than a thousand volumes" (Dew, *Go Forward with Faith*, 30).

Years later, **President Gordon B. Hinckley** spoke fondly of the family home library:

"When I was a boy we lived in a large old house. One room was called the library. It had a solid table and a good lamp, three or four comfortable chairs with good light, and books in cases that lined the walls. There were many volumes—the acquisitions of my father and mother over a period of many years.

"We were never forced to read them, but they were placed where they were handy and where we could get at them whenever we wished.



Bryant and Ada Hinckley with their children, Sylvia, Gordon, Sherman, Ruth, and Ramona, about 1928

"There was quiet in that room. It was understood that it was a place to study.

"There were also magazines—the Church magazines and two or three other good magazines. There were books of history and literature, books on technical subjects, dictionaries, a set of encyclopedias, and an atlas of the world. There was no television, of course, at that time. Radio came along while I was growing up. But there was an environment, an environment of learning. I would not have you believe that we were great scholars. But we were exposed to great literature, great ideas from great thinkers, and the language of men and women who thought deeply and wrote beautifully" ("The Environment of Our Homes," *Ensign*, June 1985, 4).

## His Parents Expected the Best from Their Children [15.7]

"Ironically, for all the emphasis among the Hinckleys on literature and learning, as a young boy Gordon did not like school. At age six, when he should have started first grade, he hid from his parents on the first day of school. Because he was a small child with delicate health, Bryant and Ada decided he might do better the following year attending with his [younger brother] Sherman.

"When the first day of school arrived a year later, Gordon ran laps around the house in an attempt to avoid his mother, but Ada prevailed. . . . It wasn't long before Gordon joined his



Bryant S. Hinckley (1867–1961), father of Gordon B. Hinckley

age group in the second grade" (Dew, *Go Forward with Faith*, 30–31). It wasn't until high school that Gordon's attitude changed dramatically.

His parents always encouraged him and the other children to do their best and certain standards and behavior were always expected. They were not strict disciplinarians, but they had a way of communicating what was expected. If needed, they assigned extra chores to those children who needed encouragement. On one occasion, in the first grade, "after a particularly rough day at school, Gordon returned home, threw his books on the table as he walked through the kitchen, and let out an expletive. Ada, shocked at his language, explained that under no circumstances would those words ever come out of his mouth again and led Gordon to the bathroom, where she generously coated a clean washcloth with soap and rubbed it around his tongue and teeth. He sputtered and fumed and felt like swearing again, but resisted the urge" (Dew, *Go Forward with Faith*, 33). He later said: "The lesson was worthwhile. I think I can say that I have tried to avoid using the name of the Lord in vain since that day. I am grateful for that lesson" ("Take Not the Name of God in Vain," *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 46).

## He Received a Patriarchal Blessing [15.8]

In 1995, **President Gordon B. Hinckley** spoke of his patriarchal blessing:

"I had a patriarchal blessing when I was a little boy, eleven years of age. A convert to the Church [Thomas E. Callister] who had come from England, who was our patriarch, laid his hands upon my head and gave me a blessing. I think I never read that blessing until I was on the boat coming over to England in 1933. I took it out of my trunk and read it carefully, and I read it every now and again while I was on my mission in England.

"I don't want to tell you everything in that blessing, but that man spoke with a prophetic voice. He said, among other things, that I would lift my voice in testimony of the truth in the nations of the earth. When I was released from my mission, I spoke in London in a testimony meeting in the Battersea Town Hall. The next Sunday I spoke in Berlin. The next Sunday I spoke in Paris. The next Sunday I spoke in Washington, D. C. I came home tired and weak and thin and weary, . . . and I said, 'I've had it. I've traveled as far as I want to travel. I never want to travel again.' And I thought I had fulfilled that blessing. I had spoken in four of the great capitals of the world—London, Berlin, Paris, and Washington, D. C. I thought I had fulfilled that part of that blessing.

"I say with gratitude and in a spirit of testimony . . . that it has since been my privilege, out of the providence and

goodness of the Lord, to bear testimony of this work and of the divine calling of the Prophet Joseph Smith in all of the lands of Asia—nearly, at least—Japan, Korea, Thailand, Taiwan, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Burma, Malaysia, India, Indonesia, Singapore, what have you. I have testified in Australia, New Zealand, the islands of the Pacific, the nations of Europe, all of the nations of South America, and all of the nations of the Orient in testimony of the divinity of this work” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [1997], 422–23).

## He Received a Strong Testimony of Joseph Smith [15.9]

**President Hinckley** shared an experience he had as a young boy, when he came to know that Joseph Smith was a prophet:

“Many years ago when at the age of twelve I was ordained a deacon, my father, who was president of our stake, took me to my first stake priesthood meeting. In those days these meetings were held on a week night. I recall that we went to the Tenth Ward building in Salt Lake City, Utah. He walked up to the stand, and I sat on the back row, feeling a little alone and uncomfortable in that hall filled with strong men who had been ordained to the priesthood of God. The meeting was called to order, the opening song was announced, and—as was then the custom—we all stood to sing. There were perhaps as many as four hundred there. Together these men lifted their strong voices, some with the accents of the European lands from which they had come as converts, all singing these words with a great spirit of conviction and testimony:

*Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah!  
Jesus anointed that Prophet and Seer.*

*Blessed to open the last dispensation,  
Kings shall extol him, and  
nations revere.*

[Hymns, no. 27.]

“They were singing of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and as they did so there came into my heart a great surge of love for and belief in the mighty Prophet of this dispensation. In my childhood I had been taught much of him in meetings and classes in our ward as well as in our home;



Gordon B. Hinckley

but my experience in that stake priesthood meeting was different. I knew then, by the power of the Holy Ghost, that Joseph Smith was indeed a prophet of God.

“It is true that during the years which followed there were times when that testimony wavered somewhat, particularly in the seasons of my undergraduate university work. However, that conviction never left me entirely; and it has grown stronger through the years, partly because of the challenges of those days which compelled me to read and study and make certain for myself” (“Praise to the Man,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1983, 2).

## There Wasn’t Enough Room at the Junior High School [15.10]

**President Gordon B. Hinckley** shared the following experience from when he entered junior high school:

“The [junior high school] building could not accommodate all the students, so our class of the seventh grade was sent back to the [elementary school].

“We were insulted. We were furious. We’d spent six unhappy years in that building, and we felt we deserved something better. The boys of the class all met after school. We decided we wouldn’t tolerate this kind of treatment. We were determined we’d go on strike.

“The next day we did not show up. But we had no place to go. We couldn’t stay home because our mothers would ask questions. We didn’t think of going downtown to a show. We had no money for that. We didn’t think of going to the park. We were afraid we might be seen by Mr. Clayton, the truant officer. We didn’t think of going out behind the school fence and telling shady stories because we didn’t know any. We’d never heard of such things as drugs or anything of the kind. We just wandered about and wasted the day.

“The next morning, the principal, Mr. Stearns, was at the front door of the school to greet us. His demeanor matched his name. He said some pretty straightforward things and then told us that we could not come back to school until we brought a note from our parents. That was my first experience with a lockout. Striking, he said, was not the way to settle a problem. We were expected to be responsible citizens, and if we had a complaint, we could come to the principal’s office and discuss it.

“There was only one thing to do, and that was to go home and get the note.

“I remember walking sheepishly into the house. My mother asked what was wrong. I told her. I said that I needed a note. She wrote a note. It was very brief. It was the most stinging rebuke she ever gave me. It read as follows:

“‘Dear Mr. Stearns,  
“‘Please excuse Gordon’s  
absence yesterday. His  
action was simply an  
impulse to follow the  
crowd.’

“She signed it and handed  
it to me.

“I walked back over to  
school and got there about  
the same time a few other  
boys did. We all handed  
our notes to Mr. Stearns.  
I do not know whether he  
read them, but I have never forgotten my mother’s note.  
Though I had been an active party to the action we had  
taken, I resolved then and there that I would never do  
anything on the basis of simply following the crowd. I  
determined then and there that I would make my own  
decisions on the basis of their merits and my standards  
and not be pushed in one direction or another by those  
around me.

“That decision has blessed my life many times, sometimes  
in very uncomfortable circumstances. It has kept me from  
doing some things which, if indulged in, could at worst  
have resulted in serious injury and trouble, and at the best  
would have cost me my self-respect” (“Some Lessons I  
Learned as a Boy,” 53).

### His Faith Transcended His Doubts [15.11]

“Gordon graduated from LDS High School in 1928 and  
enrolled in the University of Utah that fall, just a year  
before the onset of the Depression. . . .

“As Gordon worked his way through the university and  
made the transition from dependence upon his parents  
to personal responsibility, he, like many of his peers,  
began to question assumptions about life, the world, and  
even the Church. His concerns were compounded by the  
cynicism of the times. . . .

“Fortunately, he was able to discuss some of his concerns  
with his father, and together they explored the questions  
he raised: the fallibility of the Brethren, why difficult  
things happen to people who are living the gospel, why  
God allows some of His children to suffer, and so on. The  
environment of faith that permeated Gordon’s home was  
vital during this period of searching, as he later explained:  
‘My father and mother were absolutely solid in their faith.  
They didn’t try to push the gospel down my throat or  
compel me to participate, but they didn’t back away from  
expressing their feelings either. My father was wise and  
judicious and was not dogmatic. He had taught university



Gordon B. Hinckley

students and appreciated young people along with their  
points of view and difficulties. He had a tolerant, under-  
standing attitude and was willing to talk about anything  
I had on my mind.’

“Underneath Gordon’s questions and critical attitude lay a  
thread of faith that had been long in the weaving. Little by  
little, despite his questions and doubts, he realized that he  
had a testimony he could not deny. And though he began  
to understand that there wasn’t always a clear-cut or easy  
answer for every difficult question, he also found that his  
faith in God transcended his doubts. Since that evening  
many years earlier when he had attended his first stake  
priesthood meeting, he had known that Joseph Smith  
was a prophet: ‘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,’ he said”  
(Dew, *Go Forward with Faith*, 45–47).

### His Mother Died [15.12]

**Gordon B. Hinckley’s** mother, Ada Bitner Hinckley  
died on November 9, 1930, when he was 20 years old.  
Speaking of his mother’s death, he said:

“At the age of fifty, she developed cancer. [My father] was  
solicitous of her every need. I recall our family prayers,  
with his tearful pleadings and our tearful pleadings.

“Of course there was no  
medical insurance then.  
He would have spent every  
dollar he owned to help  
her. He did, in fact, spend  
very much. He took her to  
Los Angeles in search of  
better medical care. But it  
was to no avail.

“That was sixty-two years  
ago, but I remember with  
clarity my brokenhearted  
father as he stepped off  
the train and greeted his  
grief-stricken children. We  
walked solemnly down the  
station platform to the baggage car, where the casket was  
unloaded and taken by the mortician. We came to know  
even more about the tenderness of our father’s heart. This  
has had an effect on me all of my life.

“I also came to know something of death—the absolute  
devastation of children losing their mother—but also of  
peace without pain, and the certainty that death cannot  
be the end of the soul” (“Some Lessons I Learned as a  
Boy,” 54).



Ada Bitner Hinckley (1880–1930),  
mother of Gordon B. Hinckley

## He Served a Full-Time Mission in England [15.13]

After graduating from the University of Utah in 1932, Gordon B. Hinckley intended to enroll at the Columbia University School of Journalism in New York City, but the Lord had other plans for him. “On a Sunday afternoon not long before his twenty-third birthday, Gordon was invited to Bishop Duncan’s home. The bishop got right to the point: Had he thought of serving a mission? He was shocked. In those days of depression, missionary service was the exception rather than the rule. The distressing financial future had made the burden of supporting a missionary virtually impossible for most families; indeed, few missionaries were even being called. Nevertheless, as soon as his bishop raised the subject, he knew what his answer must be: he told Bishop Duncan he would go.

“The reality of financing the mission loomed, however. Bryant assured his son they would find a way, and Sherman [Gordon’s younger brother] volunteered to help. Gordon planned to devote the modest savings he had accumulated for graduate school. Unfortunately, not long after he committed to go, the bank where he had established his savings account failed and he lost everything. But some time later the family discovered that for years Ada had nurtured a small savings account with the coins she received in change when buying groceries and had earmarked the fund for her sons’ missionary service.

Gordon was overwhelmed with his mother’s years of quiet sacrifice and prescient foresight.

Even after her death she continued to support and sustain him. More important was his mother’s example of consecration, and he considered sacred the money he received from her savings” (Dew, *Go Forward with Faith*, 56).

He received his mission call to the European Mission, with headquarters in London, England. Elder Hinckley traveled to England on a ship that docked at Plymouth the night of July 1, 1933. The next day he was assigned to go to Preston, Lancashire.

As with many missionaries, he had his discouraging moments. His allergies bothered him from all of the June grasses that were pollinating at the time he arrived. Tears from hay fever were constant, and his energy and stamina were at an all-time low. Later **Elder Hinckley** recalled:



As a missionary, speaking in Hyde Park, London, England, July 22, 1934



Missionaries in England, May 6, 1935. Elder Hinckley is in the back row, second from the left.



Elder Hinckley (second from right) with missionaries Angus Nicholson, Richard S. Bennett, and Ormond J. Koulam

"I was not well when I arrived. Those first few weeks, because of illness and the opposition which we felt, I was discouraged. I wrote a letter home to my good father and said that I felt I was wasting my time and his money. He was my father and my stake president, and he was a wise and inspired man. He wrote a very short letter to me which said, 'Dear Gordon, I have your recent letter. I have only one suggestion: forget yourself and go to work.' Earlier that morning in our scripture class my companion and I had read these words of the Lord: '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.)

"Those words of the Master, followed by my father's letter with his counsel to forget myself and go to work, went into my very being. With my father's letter in hand, I went into our bedroom in the house at 15 Wadham Road,



On the East Creek farm, February 1936, soon after his mission

where we lived, and got on my knees and made a pledge with the Lord. I covenanted that I would try to forget myself and lose myself in His service.

"That July day in 1933 was my day of decision. A new light came into my life and a new joy into my heart. The fog of England seemed to lift, and I saw the sunlight. I had a rich and wonderful mission experience, for which I shall ever be grateful" ("Taking the Gospel to

Britain: A Declaration of Vision, Faith, Courage, and Truth," *Ensign*, July 1987, 7).

"No sooner had young Elder Hinckley thrown himself into the work in Lancashire than he received a letter calling him to London as a special assistant to Elder Joseph F. Merrill, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles and president of the European Mission.

"'We didn't baptize many people in London in those days,' recalls mission companion Wendell J. Ashton, 'but Elder Hinckley was a knockout in those street meetings on Hyde Park corner. I can promise you we learned to speak quickly on our feet. And Elder Hinckley was the best of the bunch. I have always thought that he gained tremendous firsthand experience there in London's Hyde Park doing what he would so skillfully do for the rest of his life—defend the Church and speak up courageously of its truths. He was good at it then and he is good at it now'" (Jeffrey R. Holland, "President Gordon B. Hinckley: Stalwart and Brave He Stands," *Ensign*, June 1995, 8).



He served as executive secretary of the Church Radio, Publicity, and Mission Literature Committee in 1935, where he wrote and developed many of the Church's first public relations and visual materials.

## He Served on the Radio, Publicity, and Mission Literature Committee [15.14]

After Gordon B. Hinckley's mission, his mission president, Elder Joseph F. Merrill of the Council of the Twelve, asked him to report to President Heber J. Grant and the First Presidency concerning the publication of missionary materials. "A new committee of the Twelve was organized to bring to missionary work the power of the latest means of communication. Brother Hinckley was to serve as producer and secretary for the Church Radio, Publicity, and Mission Literature Committee. This was, in fact, the beginning of the Public Communications Office in the

Church. His plans to go to Columbia University would be put aside. His career as a seminary teacher, for he taught half-time when he returned from his mission, would be replaced. The committee included six members of the Twelve, with Elder Stephen L Richards as chairman" (Packer, "President Hinckley: First Counselor," 5).



Marjorie Pay

### He Married Marjorie Pay [15.15]

Gordon B. Hinckley and Marjorie Pay had been courting each other before his mission and had become good friends. She was excited to hear of his call and encouraged him to serve. "'Marjorie was 'the girl next door' when we were growing up,' recalls President Hinckley's younger sister Ramona H. Sullivan, 'only in this case it was the girl across the street. And she was very pretty. The thing I remember most about Marge in those early years is how polished and impressive she was, even as a young girl, in giving readings and performances in the meetings and activities of our old First Ward. All the other kids would just sort of stand up and mumble through something, but Marjorie was downright professional. She had all of the elocution and all of the movements. I still remember those readings she gave.'

"Although they didn't start dating seriously until after he was home from his mission, it was one of those very youthful readings Marjorie Pay gave which first caught his attention. 'I saw her first in Primary,' President Hinckley says with a laugh. 'She gave a reading. I don't know what it did to me, but I never forgot it. Then she grew older into a beautiful young woman, and I had the good sense to marry her'" (Holland, "President Hinckley: Stalwart and Brave," 10–11).

Prior to her marriage to Gordon B. Hinckley, Marjorie made the following observations about her future husband: "'As we got closer to marriage, I felt completely confident that Gordon loved me. But I also knew somehow that I would never come first with him. I knew I was going to be second in his life and that the Lord was going to be first. And that was okay.'

"Such a realization might well have discouraged some other brides-to-be, but Marjorie was unruffled. 'It seemed to me that if you understood the gospel and the purpose

of our being here, you would want a husband who put the Lord first. I felt secure knowing he was that kind of man,' she explained" (Dew, *Go Forward with Faith*, 114–15).

### There Was a Period of Adjustment to Marriage [15.16]

"While he continued to learn more about the administration of the Church, Gordon was also finding there was plenty to keep him occupied at home as he and Marjorie adjusted to living with each other. And there *were* adjustments. Shortly after they had announced their engagement, Emma Marr Petersen, Mark E. Petersen's wife, had warned Marjorie that the first ten years of marriage would be the hardest. Her comment both puzzled and shocked Marjorie, who later admitted: 'I was just sure the first ten years would be bliss. But during our first year together I discovered she was *dead right!* There were a lot of adjustments. Of course, they weren't the kind of thing you ran home to mother about. But I cried into my pillow now and again. The problems were almost always related to learning to live on someone else's schedule and to do things someone else's way. We loved each other, there was no doubt about that. But we also had to get used to each other. I think *every* couple has to get used to each other'" (Dew, *Go Forward with Faith*, 118).

### He Was Called to the Apostleship [15.17]

For 23 years Gordon B. Hinckley had worked at the Church headquarters and had nurtured a close relationship with many General Authorities. In 1958 he was called to serve as an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Early in the morning of September 30, 1961, he received a phone call from President David O. McKay asking him to come to his office as soon as possible.



A newly called Apostle,  
September 1961

"Less than an hour later the two men sat knee to knee and President McKay explained the reason for this early visit prior to that morning's session of general conference: 'I have felt to nominate you to fill the vacancy in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,' he told Elder Hinckley simply, 'and we would like to sustain you today in conference.' The words took Gordon's breath

away, and he searched without success for a response. How could it be, that such a call would come to him? He had known, of course, of the vacancy in the Quorum. But never for a moment had he—or would he have—thought he would be called to fill it.

“President McKay continued: ‘Your grandfather was worthy of this, as was your father. And so are you.’ With these words, Elder Hinckley’s composure crumbled, for there was no compliment the prophet could have paid him that would have meant more. ‘Tears began to fill my eyes as President McKay looked at me with those piercing eyes of his and spoke to me of my forebears,’ he remembered. ‘My father was a better man than I have ever been, but he didn’t have the opportunities I have had. The Lord has blessed me with tremendous opportunities.’ . . .

“In a letter he pecked out on his own Underwood manual typewriter, he wrote his missionary son serving in Duisburg, Germany. ‘I thought I would let you know that I have been called to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,’ he told Dick. ‘I don’t know why I have been called to such a position. I have done nothing extraordinary but have tried only to do the best I could with the tasks I’ve been given without worrying about who got the credit.’ Dick said later, ‘I could tell from the letter that Dad was overwhelmed with it all. I myself was surprised with the news. The thought had never crossed my mind that he might be called into the Twelve’” (Dew, *Go Forward with Faith*, 234, 236).



Looking at the first Chinese copy of the Book of Mormon with President David O. McKay, January 1966



With President David O. McKay at the pulpit in the Salt Lake Tabernacle

## He Felt Humbled by the Call to Be an Apostle [15.18]

When called upon to bear his testimony following his call to be an Apostle, **Elder Gordon B. Hinckley** told those assembled at general conference that day: “I think I feel some sense of the burden of this responsibility to stand as a witness of the Lord Jesus Christ before a world that is reluctant to accept him. ‘I stand all amazed at the love Jesus offers me.’ I am subdued by the confidence of the Lord’s Prophet in me, and by the expressed love of these, my brethren, beside whom I feel like a pigmy. I pray for strength; I pray for help; and I pray for the faith and the will to be obedient” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1961, 115–16).

## We Must Remember the Atonement of Jesus Christ [15.19]

**Elder Gordon B. Hinckley** taught:

“No member of this Church must ever forget the terrible price paid by our Redeemer who gave his life that all men might live—the agony of Gethsemane, the bitter mockery of his trial, the vicious crown of thorns tearing at his flesh, the blood cry of the mob before Pilate, the lonely burden of his heavy walk along the way to Calvary, the terrifying pain as great nails pierced his hands and feet, the fevered torture of his body as he hung that tragic day, the Son of God crying out, ‘Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.’ (Luke 23:34.)

“This was the cross, the instrument of his torture, the terrible device designed to destroy the Man of Peace, the evil recompense for his miraculous work of healing the sick, of causing the blind to see, of raising the dead. This was the cross on which he hung and died on Golgotha’s lonely summit.

“We cannot forget that. We must never forget it, for here our Savior, our Redeemer, the Son of God, gave himself a vicarious sacrifice for each of us” (“The Symbol of Christ,” *Ensign*, May 1975, 93).



Elder and Sister Hinckley, April 1970



Elder and Sister Hinckley with their children, October 1961

## He Was Called to Be a Counselor in the First Presidency [15.20]

“Surely one of the most challenging moments came to the life of Gordon B. Hinckley when, in the summer of 1981, President Spencer W. Kimball called Elder Hinckley to serve as a counselor in the First Presidency. Although they were experiencing varying degrees of declining health, the First Presidency was ‘complete’ with President Kimball, President N. Eldon Tanner, and President Marion G. Romney still serving. Nevertheless, in a moment of clear revelatory inspiration *and* good health, President Kimball asked Elder Hinckley to join the First Presidency as ‘Counselor in the First Presidency’—an additional counselor, for which there was ample precedent in Church history.



With President Spencer W. Kimball

“‘When I accepted President Kimball’s call to join them, I did not know exactly how I would function or fit in, and perhaps they did not at the time,’ says President Hinckley. ‘But the circumstances called for additional help, and I was more than willing to give it. I did not know whether it would be for a few days or a few months.’

“As it turned out, President

Gordon B. Hinckley would never again leave the First Presidency of the Church. In 1982 President Tanner passed away, with President Romney moving to First

Counselor and President Hinckley being sustained as Second Counselor.

“‘That was a very heavy and overwhelming responsibility,’ he recalls. ‘It was an almost terrifying load at times. Of course, I consulted with our brethren of the Twelve.

“‘I recall on one particular occasion getting on my knees before the Lord and asking for help in the midst of that very difficult situation. And there came into my mind those reassuring words, “Be still and know that I am God” (D&C 101:16). I knew again that this was His work, that He would not let it fail, that all I had to do was work at it and do our very best, and that the work would move forward without let or hindrance of any kind’” (Holland, “President Hinckley: Stalwart and Brave,” 12).



With President Howard W. Hunter

health. The responsibility of leadership fell upon him for many decisions that kept the Church moving forward. He accepted the overwhelming workload humbly and prayerfully.

“**Elder Thomas S. Monson** reflected on President Hinckley’s role during this unique period in the Church’s history: ‘President Hinckley found himself in a most challenging situation, because President Kimball was still the prophet. Even though a man may be impaired physically, he might not be impaired mentally or spiritually. President Hinckley had the unenviable task of not going too far too fast, but of going far enough. He always had the rounded ability and common sense to do what a counselor should do—that of never intruding on what belonged solely to the President’” (Dew, *Go Forward with Faith*, 401).



With President Joseph Fielding Smith, reading the booklet *Truth Restored*, which Gordon B. Hinckley had written

While serving as counselor to Presidents Spencer W. Kimball, Ezra T. Benson, and Howard W. Hunter, President Hinckley observed the physical burdens they experienced in the latter part of their lives. There were times when he presided at meetings when the President or the other counselors could not attend because of poor



Between 1981–85, he frequently presided at general conference alone.

In all, President Hinckley served for 14 years as a counselor in the First Presidency.

## He Affirmed the Fundamental Doctrines of the Church, Likening Them to Four Cornerstones of a Building [15.21]

**President Gordon B. Hinckley** declared the cornerstones of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: “Absolutely basic to our faith is our testimony of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, who under a divine plan was born in Bethlehem of Judea. . . .

“He is the chief cornerstone of the church which bears his name, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. There is no other name given among men whereby we can be saved. (See Acts 4:12.) He is the author of our salvation, the giver of eternal life. (See Heb. 5:9.) There is none to equal him. There never has been. There never will be. Thanks be to God for the gift of his Beloved Son, who gave his life that we might live, and who is the chief, immovable cornerstone of our faith and his church.

“The second cornerstone—the first vision of the Prophet Joseph Smith. . . .

“This transcendent experience opened the marvelous work of restoration. It lifted the curtain on the long-promised dispensation of the fulness of times.

“For more than a century and a half, enemies, critics, and some would-be scholars have worn out their lives trying to disprove the validity of that vision. Of course they cannot understand it. The things of God are understood by the Spirit of God. There had been nothing of comparable magnitude since the Son of God walked the earth in mortality. Without it as a foundation stone for our faith and organization, we have nothing. With it, we have everything. . . .

“The third cornerstone—the Book of Mormon. . . . It contains what has been described as the fifth Gospel, a moving testament of the new world concerning the visit of the resurrected Redeemer on the soil of this hemisphere. . . .

“ . . . Hand in hand with the Bible, whose companion volume it is, it stands as another witness to a doubting generation that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. It is an unassailable cornerstone of our faith.

“Cornerstone number four—the restoration to earth of priesthood power and authority. . . .

“In its full restoration, it involved the coming of John the Baptist, . . . and of Peter, James, and John, they who faithfully walked with the Master before his death and proclaimed his resurrection and divinity following his death. It involved Moses, Elias, and Elijah, each bringing priesthood keys to complete the work of restoring all of the acts and ordinances of previous dispensations in this the great, final dispensation of the fulness of times. . . .

“Each of these cornerstones is related to the other, each connected by a foundation of Apostles and prophets, all tied to the chief cornerstone, Jesus Christ. On this has been established his Church, ‘fitly framed together,’ for the blessing of all who will partake of its offering. (Eph. 2:21.)” (“The Cornerstones of Our Faith,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 51–53).



President Hinckley teaching

## He Encouraged Single Church Members to Use Their Talents [15.22]

Addressing a group of young people, **President Gordon B. Hinckley** said:

“It would be a beautiful world if every girl had the privilege of marriage to a good young man whom she could look upon with pride and gladness as her companion in time and eternity, hers alone to love and cherish, to

respect and help. What a wonderful world it would be if every young man were married to a wife in the house of the Lord, one at whose side he would stand as protector, provider, husband, and companion.

"But it doesn't work out that way in every case. There are some, who for reasons unexplainable, do not have the opportunity of marriage. To you I should like to say a word or two. Don't waste your time and wear out your lives wandering about in the wasteland of self-pity. God has given you talents of one kind or another. God has given you the capacity to serve the needs of others and bless their lives with your kindness and concern. Reach out to someone in need. There are so very many out there.

"Add knowledge to knowledge. Refine your mind and skills in a chosen field of discipline. Never in the history



Speaking at general conference

of the world have women been afforded such opportunities in the professions, in business, in education, and in all of the honorable vocations of life. Do not feel that because you are single God has forsaken you" ("If I Were You, What Would I Do?" *Brigham Young University 1983–84 Fireside and Devotional Speeches* [1984], 11).

## He Taught the Importance of Motherhood [15.23]

In the September 1983 general women's meeting, **President Gordon B. Hinckley** said:

"To you women who find it necessary to work when you would rather be at home, may I speak briefly. I know that there are many of you who find yourselves in this situation. Some of you have been abandoned and are divorced, with children to care for. Some of you are widows with dependent families. I honor you and respect you for your integrity and spirit of self-reliance. I pray that the Lord will bless you with strength and great capacity, for you need both. You have the responsibilities of both breadwinner and homemaker. I know that it is difficult. I know that it is discouraging. . . .

"We sense, at least in some small degree, the loneliness you must occasionally feel and the frustrations you must experience as you try to cope with problems that sometimes seem beyond your capacity to handle. . . .

"Now to others who work when it is not necessary and who, while doing so, leave children to the care of those



Greeting a group of young women

who often are only poor substitutes, I offer a word of caution. Do not follow a practice which will bring you later regret. If the purpose of your daily employment is simply to get money for a boat or a fancy automobile or some other desirable but unnecessary thing, and in the process you lose the companionship of your children and the opportunity to rear them, you may find that you have lost the substance while grasping at the shadow. . . .

" . . . I am satisfied that [our Father in Heaven] loves his daughters as much as he loves his sons. President Harold B. Lee once remarked that priesthood is the power by which God works through us as men. I should like to add that motherhood is the means by which God carries forward his grand design of continuity of the race. Both priesthood and motherhood are essentials of the plan of the Lord.

"Each complements the other. Each is needed by the other. God has created us male and female, each unique in his or her individual capacities and potential. The woman is the bearer and the nurturer of children. The man is the provider and protector. No legislation can alter the sexes. Legislation should provide equality of opportunity, equality of compensation, equality of political privilege. But any legislation which is designed to create neuter gender of that which God created male and female will bring more problems than benefits. Of that I am convinced.

"I wish with all my heart we would spend less of our time talking about rights and more talking about responsibilities. God has given the women of this Church a work to do in building his kingdom" ("Live Up to Your Inheritance," *Ensign*, Nov. 1983, 83–84).

## Selfishness Is a Major Cause of Divorce [15.24]

**President Gordon B. Hinckley** taught:

"Why all of these broken homes? What happens to marriages that begin with sincere love and a desire to be loyal and faithful and true one to another?"

"There is no simple answer. I acknowledge that. But it appears to me that there are some obvious reasons that account for a very high percentage of these problems. I say this out of experience in dealing with such tragedies. I find selfishness to be the root cause of most of it.

"I am satisfied that a happy marriage is not so much a matter of romance as it is an anxious concern for the comfort and well-being of one's companion.

"Selfishness so often is the basis of money problems, which are a very serious and real factor affecting the stability of family life. Selfishness is at the root of adultery, the breaking of solemn and sacred covenants to satisfy selfish lust. Selfishness is the antithesis of love. It is a cankering expression of greed. It destroys self-discipline. It obliterates loyalty. It tears up sacred covenants. It afflicts both men and women.

"Too many who come to marriage have been coddled and spoiled and somehow led to feel that everything must be precisely right at all times, that life is a series of entertainments, that appetites are to be satisfied without regard to principle. How tragic the consequences of such hollow and unreasonable thinking! . . .

"There is a remedy for all of this. It is not found in divorce. It is found in the gospel of the Son of God. He it was who said, 'What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.' (Matt. 19:6.) The remedy for most marriage stress is not in divorce. It is in repentance. It is not in separation. It is in simple integrity that leads

a man to square up his shoulders and meet his obligations. It is found in the Golden Rule. . . .

"There may be now and again a legitimate cause for divorce. I am not one to say that it is never justified. But I say without hesitation that this plague among us, which seems to be growing everywhere, is not of God, but rather is the work of the adversary of righteousness and peace



**President and Sister Hinckley** celebrating a wedding anniversary

and truth" ("What God Hath Joined Together," *Ensign*, May 1991, 73–74).

## Marriage Should Be an Eternal Partnership [15.25]

**President Gordon B. Hinckley** said:

"I am satisfied that God our Eternal Father does not love His daughters less than He loves His sons. Under the gospel plan the wife walks neither ahead nor behind her husband, but at his side in a true companionship before the Lord.

"I see my own companion of fifty-two years. Is her contribution less acceptable before the Lord than is mine? I am satisfied it is not. She has walked quietly at my side, sustained me in my responsibilities, reared and blessed our children, served in many capacities in the Church, and spread an unmitigated measure of cheer and goodness wherever she has gone.

The older I grow the more I appreciate—yes, the more I love—this little woman with whom I knelt at the altar in the house of the Lord more than half a century ago.

"I wish with all of my heart that every marriage might be a happy marriage. I wish that every marriage might be an eternal partnership. I believe that wish can be realized if there is a willingness to make the effort to bring it to pass" ("Rise to the Stature of the Divine within You," *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 97).

"I believe in the family where there is a husband who regards his companion as his greatest asset and treats her accordingly; where there is a wife who looks upon her husband as her anchor and strength, her comfort and security; where there are children who look to mother and father with respect and gratitude; where there are parents who look upon those children as blessings and find a great and serious and wonderful challenge in their nurture and rearing. The cultivation of such a home requires effort and energy, forgiveness and patience, love and endurance and sacrifice; but it is worth all of these and more" ("This I Believe," *Brigham Young University 1991–92 Devotional and Fireside Speeches* [1992], 80).



**Sister Marjorie Pay Hinckley**, March 1988



President Hinckley with U.S. President Ronald Reagan and President Thomas S. Monson at a bishops' storehouse, September 1982

## He Became President of the Church [15.26]

On March 3, 1995, President Howard W. Hunter passed away. President Gordon B. Hinckley, knowing the mantle would now fall upon him to preside over the Church, needed the Lord's assurance and confirmation. He went to the Salt Lake Temple to seek the Lord's will. There in the meeting room of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, behind locked doors, he read from the scriptures and reflected upon the Savior's Atonement. He studied the portraits of the prophets of this dispensation and felt that they were encouraging him and that he would be blessed and sustained in his ministry. **President Hinckley** wrote:

"They seemed to say to me that they had spoken on my behalf in a council held in the heavens, that I had no need to fear, that I would be blessed and sustained in my ministry.

"I got on my knees and pleaded with the Lord. I spoke with Him at length in prayer. . . . I am confident that by the power of the Spirit, I heard the word of the Lord, not vocally, but as a warmth that was felt within my heart concerning the questions I had raised in prayer."

"After his time in the temple, President Hinckley felt a measure of peace about what lay ahead. 'I feel better, and I have a much firmer assurance in my heart that the Lord is working His will with reference to His cause and kingdom, that I will be sustained as President of the Church and prophet, seer, and revelator, and so serve for such time as the Lord wills,' he wrote afterward. 'With the confirmation of the Spirit in my heart, I am now ready to go forward to do the very best work I know how to do. It is difficult for me to believe that the Lord is placing me in this most high and sacred responsibility. . . . I hope that the Lord has trained me to do what He

expects of me. I will give Him total loyalty, and I will certainly seek His direction.' . . .

"President James E. Faust voiced a sentiment shared by many General Authorities: 'I don't know of any man who has come to the Presidency of this Church who has been so well prepared for the responsibility. President Hinckley has known and worked with every Church President from Heber J. Grant to Howard W. Hunter, and has been tutored by all of the great leaders of our time one-on-one in a very personal way'" (Dew, *Go Forward with Faith*, 508, 510–11).

## He Was at Ease with the Media [15.27]

President Gordon B. Hinckley's early assignments in public relations gave him much experience with the media. His willingness to interact with the media gave the Church unprecedented opportunities to share the message of the Restoration with the world. His interviews on radio and television offered some people exposure to the Church for the first time.

"'President Hinckley is helping to lead the Church out of obscurity,' **Elder Neal A. Maxwell** stated. 'The Church can't move forward as it needs to if we are hidden under a bushel. Someone has to step out, and President Hinckley is willing to do so. He is a man of history and modernity at the same time, and he has marvelous gifts of expression that enable him to present our message in a way that appeals to people everywhere.' . . .



Being interviewed on the *Larry King Live* television show



The First Presidency during a press conference near the statue of Joseph Smith in the Joseph Smith Memorial Building

“‘President Hinckley respects the media, but he is not afraid of them,’ explained Elder Maxwell, who witnessed his performance in similar settings. ‘And he has such a solid grasp of both Church history and facts about the Church today that he is not likely to be thrown by a question that he hasn’t already thought about or processed in his own mind. He is able to give answers of sound-bite length that are important. He is quick mentally and equal to the engagements that come up. And he doesn’t feel compelled to gloss over any of our shortcomings as a people. He doesn’t put forward any gilding or veneer. As a result, reporters respond to his genuineness. He has the capacity to connect with people from all stations and in that respect is eminently prepared to tell our story to the world’ ” (Dew, *Go Forward with Faith*, 536, 546–47).



With television commentator Mike Wallace, while President Hinckley was being interviewed for a segment on the television program *60 Minutes*, December 1995



The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in front of the Christ statue in the North Visitors' Center on Temple Square, 1995

## We Believe in Christ [15.28]

During a 1995 radio interview, **President Gordon B. Hinckley** explained: “We are Christians. No church in the world speaks up with a stronger witness of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world than does this Church, which carries His name—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. And His gospel is the gospel we

teach. And the spirit of love which we exemplify is the spirit in which we try to work” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, 278).

## Revelation Continues [15.29]

**President Gordon B. Hinckley** said: “Somebody asked Brother Widtsoe once, ‘When are we going to have another revelation? How is it that we haven’t had any revelations since the Doctrine and Covenants was compiled? How long has it been since we’ve had a revelation?’ Brother Widtsoe replied, ‘Oh, about last Thursday.’ Now, that’s the way it goes. Each Thursday, when we are at home, the First Presidency and the Twelve meet in the temple, in those sacred hallowed precincts, and we pray together and discuss certain matters together, and the spirit of revelation comes upon those present. I know. I have seen it. I was there that June day in 1978 when President Kimball received revelation, surrounded by members of the Twelve, of whom I was one at the time. This is the work of God. This is His almighty work. No man can stop or hinder it. It will go on and continue to grow and bless the lives of people across the earth” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, 555).

## He Explained the Need for the Proclamation on the Family [15.30]

In September 1995, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles issued “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.” It was first read by **President Gordon B. Hinckley** as part of his message at the General Relief Society Meeting. Before he read it, he said: “With so much of sophistry that is passed off as truth, with so much of deception concerning standards and values, with so much of allurements and enticement to take on the slow stain of the world, we have felt to warn and forewarn. In furtherance of this we of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles now issue a proclamation to the Church and to the world as a declaration and reaffirmation of standards, doctrines, and practices relative to the family which the prophets, seers, and revelators of this church have repeatedly stated throughout its history” (“Stand Strong against the Wiles of the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 100).

At a media luncheon and press conference in May 1996, **President Gordon B. Hinckley** offered more insight on the need for the proclamation: “Why do we have this proclamation on the family now? Because the family is under attack. All across the world families are falling apart. The place to begin to improve society is in the home.

Children do, for the most part, what they are taught. We are trying to make the world better by making the family stronger" (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, 2009).

## "God Bless You, Mothers!" [15.31]

**President Gordon B. Hinckley** said:

"The true strength of any nation, society, or family lies in those qualities of character that have been acquired for the most part by children taught in the quiet, simple, everyday manner of mothers. What Jean Paul Richter once declared of fathers is even more true of mothers—and I paraphrase it just a little to make a point—'What a mother says to her children is not heard by the world, but it will be heard by posterity.' . . .



Enjoying some time with children

" . . . I feel to invite women everywhere to rise to the great potential within you. I do not ask that you reach beyond your capacity. I hope you will not nag yourselves with thoughts of failure. I hope you will not try to set goals far beyond your capacity to achieve. I hope you will simply do what you can do in the best way you know. If you do so, you will witness miracles come to pass. . . .

"God bless you, mothers! When all the victories and defeats of men's efforts are tallied, when the dust of life's battles begins to settle, when all for which we labor so hard in this world of conquest fades before our eyes, you will be there, you must be there, as the strength for a new generation, the ever-improving onward movement of the race. Its quality will depend on you" (*Motherhood: A Heritage of Faith* [pamphlet, 1995], 6, 9, 13).

## Young Women Should Become Well Educated [15.32]

Speaking to the Young Women of the Church, **President Gordon B. Hinckley** said: "I urge each of you young women to get all of the schooling you can get. You will need it for the world into which you will move. Life is becoming so exceedingly competitive. Experts say that the average man or woman, during his or her working career, can expect to have at least five different jobs. The world



Enjoying some time with the young women of the Church

is changing, and it is so very important that we equip ourselves to move with that change. But there is a bright side to all of this. No other generation in all of history has offered women so many opportunities. Your first objective should be a happy marriage, sealed in the temple of the Lord, and followed by the rearing of a good family. Education can better equip you for the realization of those ideals" ("Stand True and Faithful," *Ensign*, May 1996, 92).

## The Church Is to Be an Ensign to the Nations [15.33]

As Church President, **Gordon B. Hinckley** traveled more than 1,000,000 miles and spoke to Church members in more than 60 nations. Having traveled so extensively, he understood the pressures put upon Church members throughout the world. At the October 2003 general conference of the Church, he explained the position the Church and its members should play in the world:

"I believe and testify that it is the mission of this Church to stand as an ensign to the nations and a light to the world. We have had placed upon us a great, all-encompassing mandate from which we cannot shrink nor turn aside. We accept that mandate and are determined to

fulfill it, and with the help of God we shall do it. . . .

"We must stand firm. We must hold back the world. If we do so, the Almighty will be our strength and our protector, our guide and our revelator. We shall have the comfort of knowing that we are doing what He would have us do.



President Hinckley with U.S. President George H. W. Bush, July 1992

Others may not agree with us, but I am confident that they will respect us. We will not be left alone. There are many not of our faith but who feel as we do. They will support us. They will sustain us in our efforts.

“We cannot be arrogant. We cannot be self-righteous. The very situation in which the Lord has placed us requires that we be humble as the beneficiaries of His direction.

“While we cannot agree with others on certain matters, we must never be disagreeable. We must be friendly, soft-spoken, neighborly, and understanding” (“An Ensign to the Nations, a Light to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 82–83).

## “The Church Is Not Complete without Temples” [15.34]

**President Gordon B. Hinckley** often spoke of the importance of temples:

“It has been my consuming desire to have a temple wherever needed so that our people, wherever they might be, could, without too great a sacrifice, come to the House of the Lord for their own ordinances and for the opportunity of doing vicarious work for the dead. . . .

“The Lord has blessed us with the means, through the faithful consecrations of the Saints, to do that which we ought to do and must do. This is the greatest era of temple building in all the history of the world. But it is not enough. We must continue to pursue it until we have a dedicated temple within reach of our faithful people everywhere” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, 629).

“I believe that no member of the Church has received the ultimate which this Church has to give until he or she has received his or her temple blessings in the house of the Lord” (“Some Thoughts on Temples, Retention of Converts, and Missionary Service,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 49).



President Hinckley greets the Saints in Africa

## He Planned to Have 100 Temples by the Year 2000 [15.35]

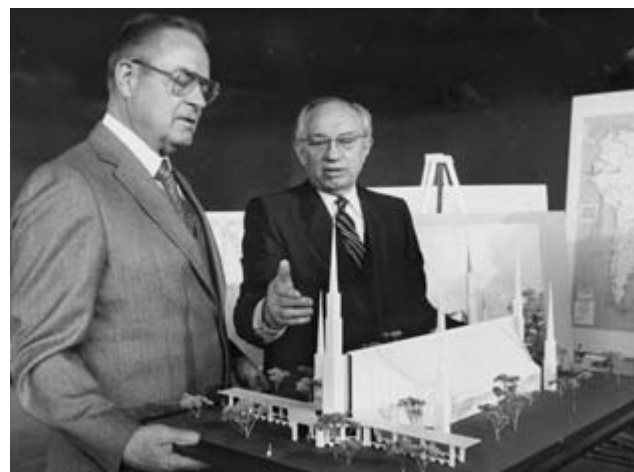
During the nearly 13 years that President Gordon B. Hinckley served as Church President, he announced the construction of 79 temples. At the time of his death, he had personally dedicated or rededicated 95 of the 124 temples then in operation.

During the April 1998 general conference, **President Hinckley** announced the building of smaller temples and announced the plan to have 100 working temples by the year 2000:

“In recent months we have traveled far out among the membership of the Church. I have been with many who have very little of this world’s goods. But they have in their hearts a great burning faith concerning this latter-day work. They love the Church. They love the gospel. They love the Lord and want to do His will. They are paying their tithing, modest as it is. They make tremendous sacrifices to visit the temples. They travel for days at a time in cheap buses and on old boats. They save their money and do without to make it all possible.

“They need nearby temples—small, beautiful, serviceable temples.

“Accordingly, I take this opportunity to announce to the entire Church a program to construct some 30 smaller temples immediately. . . . They will have all the necessary facilities to provide the ordinances of the Lord’s house.



A builder of many temples; speaking with Elder W. Grant Bangerter



President and Sister Hinckley

"This will be a tremendous undertaking. Nothing even approaching it has ever been tried before. . . . This will make a total of 47 new temples in addition to the 51 now in operation. I think we had better add 2 more to make it an even 100 by the end of this century, being 2,000 years 'since the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the flesh' (D&C 20:1). In this program we are moving on a scale the

like of which we have never seen before. . . .

"If temple ordinances are an essential part of the restored gospel, and I testify that they are, then we must provide the means by which they can be accomplished. All of our vast family history endeavor is directed to temple work. There is no other purpose for it. The temple ordinances become the crowning blessings the Church has to offer" ("New Temples to Provide 'Crowning Blessings' of the Gospel," *Ensign*, May 1998, 87–88).

The 100th temple announced (though it was the 77th dedicated) was built in Palmyra, New York, near the Sacred Grove and the Smith family farm where Joseph experienced the First Vision. The Palmyra New York Temple was dedicated on April 6, 2000, the 170th anniversary of the organization of the Church (see Shaun D. Stahle, "A Day of Sacred Significance," *Church News*, Apr. 15, 2000, 3, 6).

## He Taught of Blessings That Come from Temple Worship [15.36]

**President Gordon B. Hinckley** often spoke of the blessings that come from regular temple attendance:

"Most of our temples could be much busier than they are. In this noisy, bustling, competitive world, what a privilege it is to have a sacred house where we may experience the sanctifying influence of the Spirit of the Lord. The element of selfishness crowds in upon us constantly. We need to overcome it, and there is no better way than to go to the house of the Lord and there serve in a vicarious relationship in behalf of those who are beyond the veil

of death. What a remarkable thing this is. In most cases, we do not know those for whom we work. We expect no thanks. We have no assurance that they will accept that which we offer. But we go, and in that process we attain to a state that comes of no other effort. We literally become saviors on Mount Zion. What does this mean? Just as our Redeemer gave His life as a vicarious sacrifice for all men, and in so doing became our Savior, even so we, in a small measure, when we engage in proxy work in the temple, become as saviors to those on the other side who have no means of advancing unless something is done in their behalf by those on earth.

"And so, my brothers and sisters, I encourage you to take greater advantage of this blessed privilege. It will refine your natures. It will peel off the selfish shell in which most of us live. It will literally bring a sanctifying element into our lives and make us better men and better women" ("Closing Remarks," *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 104–5).

"I am satisfied that if our people would attend the temple more, . . . there would be less absence of love in their relationships. There would be more fidelity on the part of husbands and wives. There would be more love and peace and happiness in the homes of our people. There would come into the minds of the Latter-day Saints an increased awareness of their relationship to God our Eternal Father and of the need to work a little harder at the matter of living as sons and daughters of God.

"While the temples are generally busy, there is not a temple in the entire Church that cannot accommodate many more than are now using these beautiful and dedicated facilities" ("News of the Church," *Ensign*, May 1984, 99–100).



Reviewing the Church's program of humanitarian aid

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### The Conference Center Was Built [15.37]

During the April 1996 general conference, President Gordon B. Hinckley announced that the Church would build a new assembly building. The new building would be much larger than the Tabernacle, which seats about 6,000 people, and would better accommodate more of those who wanted to attend general conference. The groundbreaking ceremony for the facility was July 24, 1997, and the enormous building was completed in three years. The newly constructed Conference Center was designed to seat more than 21,000 people and is used for many other Church and community events.

During the first general conference held in the newly completed Conference Center, in April 2000, **President Hinckley** said:

“We are grateful for the enthusiasm of the Latter-day Saints concerning this new meeting place. I hope that enthusiasm will continue and that we shall have a full house at every conference in the future.

“This is the newest in a series of meeting places constructed by our people. When first they came to this valley they built a bowery. It shaded them from the sun but provided no warmth and very little comfort. Then they built the old Tabernacle. That was followed by the new Tabernacle, which has served us so very well for more than 130 years.

“Now in this historic season, when we mark the birth of a new century and the beginning of a new millennium, we have built this new and wonderful Conference Center. . . .

“The building of this structure has been a bold undertaking. We worried about it. We prayed about it. We listened for the whisperings of the Spirit concerning it. And only when we felt the confirming voice of the Lord did we determine to go forward” (“To All the World in Testimony,” *Ensign*, May 2000, 4–5).

### Pornography Enslaves [15.38]

Among **President Gordon B. Hinckley**’s warnings about pornography, he wrote:

“Pornography, which is a seedbed for more blatant immorality, is no longer regarded as back-alley fare. In too many homes and lives, it is now regarded as a legitimate slice of entertainment. Pornography robs its victims of self-respect and of an appreciation of the beauties of life. It tears down those who indulge and pulls them into a slough of evil thoughts and possibly evil deeds. It seduces, destroys, and distorts the truth about love and intimacy. It is more deadly than a foul disease. Pornography is as addictive and self-destructive as illicit drugs, and it literally destroys the personal relationships of those who become its slaves.

“Not one of us can afford to partake of this rubbish. We cannot risk the damage it does to the most precious of relationships—marriage—and to other interactions within the family. We cannot risk the effect it will have on our spirit and soul. Salacious videotapes, 900 telephone numbers, the filth found on the Internet, sensual magazines and movies—all are traps to be avoided like the deadliest of plagues” (*Standing for Something: Ten Neglected Virtues That Will Heal Our Hearts and Homes* [2000], 36–37).

### He Prayed for the Youth of the Church [15.39]

During a worldwide satellite broadcast, **President Gordon B. Hinckley** counseled the youth of the Church to do six things:

1. Be grateful.
2. Be smart.
3. Be clean.
4. Be true.
5. Be humble.
6. Be prayerful.

At the conclusion of his address, **President Hinckley** offered the following prayer and blessing upon the youth of the Church:

“O God, our Eternal Father, as Thy servant I bow before Thee in prayer in behalf of these young people scattered over the earth who are gathered tonight in assemblies everywhere. Please smile with favor upon them. Please listen to them as they lift their voices in prayer unto Thee. Please lead them gently by the hand in the direction they should follow.



Visiting with the youth in Chile, 1969

“Please help them to walk in paths of truth and righteousness and keep them from the evils of the world. Bless them that they shall be happy at times and serious at times, that they may enjoy life and drink of its fulness. Bless them that they may walk acceptably before Thee as Thy cherished sons and daughters. Each is Thy child with capacity to do great and noble things. Keep them on the high road that leads to achievement. Save them from the mistakes that could destroy them. If they



Elder Hinckley visiting Mainland China, May 1980

have erred, forgive their trespasses and lead them back to ways of peace and progress. For these blessings I humbly pray with gratitude for them and invoke Thy blessings upon them with love and affection, in the name of Him who carries the burdens of our sins, even the Lord Jesus Christ, amen” (“A Prophet’s Counsel and Prayer for Youth,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2001, 11).

## Salt Lake City Hosted the 2002 Winter Olympics [15.40]

From February 8–24, Salt Lake City welcomed the world by hosting the 2002 Olympic Winter Games. It was a much anticipated event, with more than seven years of planning going into it. Thousands of volunteers gave the world exposure to the hospitality of Utah residents and did much to build relationships with nations of the world. It was “a time when people of all nations came to Salt Lake City, some with suspicions and prejudices, and left with appreciation and respect” (Sarah Jane Weaver, “Olympics Earn Friends and Respect for Church,” *Church News*, Mar. 2, 2002, 3).

Afterward, **President Gordon B. Hinckley** said, “‘I think we will be pleased and benefit from [the Olympics] not only abroad but right here at home in the great relationships we’ve had in this season putting on these world games.’ . . .

“The Olympics, he said, bring out excellence in athletics and people. ‘It’s a wonderful thing that someone becomes the best in the entire world in that particular type of event. This matter of excellence is such a wonderful thing. The Olympics were designed to cultivate that. What a great thing that was. With all that, you had the fellowship, friendship, appreciation, respect and good feeling. I don’t know how we could have done any better.’

“One benefit of the Games, he said, was people getting to know Church members and tasting of their hospitality and service. ‘We’re a part of this community. We had so very many volunteers who gave unselfishly there. We’re friendly, hospitable and gracious. I think the whole world saw us as we are, and I think they came to appreciate and respect us.’ . . .

“Concluding, President Hinckley shared his love for all the world’s people—many of whom visited Utah during the Games. ‘I love people,’ he said. ‘I think I love all people. I recognize that all men and women are the sons and daughters of God and that as such all of us are brothers and sisters in a very real sense. You cannot have fatherhood without brotherhood. That’s the way I feel.’ . . .

“‘I’m glad it’s behind us, that it went so well, and I’m looking forward to new opportunities,’ he said” (Weaver, *Church News*, Mar. 2, 2002, 3).



The Salt Lake Temple, with the Church Office Building (far right) decorated for the Olympics with a banner of an ice skater



## The Nauvoo Illinois Temple Was Rebuilt [15.41]

Ira Nathaniel Hinckley, President Gordon B. Hinckley's grandfather, lived in Nauvoo as a young man when the original temple was being built, and he was part of the exodus west to escape the persecution and destruction of Nauvoo.

President Hinckley chose to have the first dedicatory session of the Nauvoo Temple on the 158th anniversary of the martyrdom of the prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum at Carthage Jail. "The first service began at 6 p.m. Central Daylight Time, which President Hinckley noted would have been 5 p.m. in Joseph Smith's day. 'At this hour 158 years ago in Carthage the murderous mob climbed the stairs, fired their pistols, and forced the door to the jail room,' said President Hinckley as he recounted events leading to the martyrdom. . . .

"President Hinckley said that he felt the presence of the Father and the Son, 'who have revealed Themselves to the Prophet Joseph who gave his life for this work. I think he must rejoice.'

"President Hinckley said that he felt the presence also of his grandfather (Ira N. Hinckley) who lived in Nauvoo as a young man, and of his father, Bryant S. Hinckley, who served as president of the Northern States Mission, which included Nauvoo. He expressed confidence that 'so many of you feel your forebears are with us.' . . .

"He commented on the vast number of people attending the dedicatory service in person and in designated meetinghouses throughout the world. In attendance at the temple were 1,631 members; proceedings were carried via satellite to approximately 2,300 locations in 72 countries. Of the congregation in the temple, he said, 'I am sure there is a great unseen audience looking upon us, those who passed to the other side and see in the structure which we dedicate today a fulfillment of their hopes, their dreams, and some compensation for their tears and their indescribable sacrifices. They must have a profound love for us who have found it possible to create this magnificent building which stands as a memorial to them'" (Gerry Avant, "'Crowning Objective of Joseph's Life,'" *Church News*, June 29, 2002, 3–4).



President Hinckley applying mortar on the Nauvoo Illinois Temple

## Finding and Retention of Converts [15.42]

In a landmark address to priesthood and Church auxiliary leaders across the globe, **President Gordon B. Hinckley** spoke regarding the need for Church members to be more active in missionary work, both in finding people to teach and in fellowshipping new converts, topics he addressed frequently:

"The number of member referrals has declined in many areas because the matter does not receive attention. For instance, in the United States and Canada 42 percent of investigators came from member referrals in 1987. By 1997 that number had dropped to 20 percent. A similar decline is found across the world.

"Now, brothers and sisters, this downward trend must be reversed. We need again to give this important matter its proper priority. The Lord will bless those who assist in this all-important work. . . .

"Great is our work, tremendous is our responsibility in helping to find those to teach. The Lord has laid upon us a mandate to teach the gospel to every creature. . . .

"Having found and baptized a new convert, we have the challenge of fellowshipping him and strengthening his testimony of the truth of this work. We cannot have him walking in the front door and out the back. Joining the Church is a very serious thing. Each convert takes upon himself or herself the name of Christ with an implied promise to keep His commandments. But coming into the Church can be a perilous experience. Unless there are warm and strong hands to greet the convert, unless there is an outreach of love and concern, he will begin to wonder about the step he has taken. Unless there are friendly hands and welcome hearts to greet him and lead him along the way, he may drop by the side.

"There is absolutely no point in doing missionary work unless we hold on to the fruits of that effort. The two must be inseparable. . . . It is an absolute imperative that we look after those who have become a part of us. To paraphrase the Savior, what shall it profit a missionary if he baptize the whole world unless those baptized remain in the Church? (Mark 8:36). . . .

"I have said before, and I repeat it, that every new convert needs three things:

"1. A friend in the Church to whom he can constantly turn, who will walk beside him, who will answer his questions, who will understand his problems.

"2. An assignment. Activity is the genius of this Church. It is the process by which we grow. Faith and love for the Lord are like the muscle of my arm. If I use them, they grow stronger. If I put them in a sling, they become weaker. Every convert deserves a responsibility. The bishop may feel that he is not qualified for responsibility. Take a chance on him. Think of the risk the Lord took when He called you. . . .

"3. Every convert must be 'nourished by the good word of God' (Moro. 6:4). It is imperative that he or she become affiliated with a priesthood quorum or the Relief Society, the Young Women, the Young Men, the Sunday School, or the Primary. He or she must be encouraged to come to sacrament meeting to partake of the sacrament, to renew the covenants made at the time of baptism. . . .

"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," *Ensign*, May 1999, 107–9).

## His Testimony of the Savior [15.43]

**President Gordon B. Hinckley** bore the following testimony of Jesus Christ:

"I have become His Apostle, appointed to do His will and teach His word. I have become His witness to the world. I repeat that witness of faith to you and to all who hear my voice this Sabbath morning.

"*Jesus is my friend.* None other has given me so much. 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends' (John 15:13). He gave His life for me. He opened the way to eternal life. Only a God could do this. I hope that I am deemed worthy of being a friend to Him.



A love of the scriptures

"*He is my exemplar.* His way of life, His absolutely selfless conduct, His outreach to those in need, His final sacrifice all stand as an example to me. I cannot measure up entirely, but I can try. . . .

"*He is my teacher.* No other voice ever spoke such wondrous language as that of the Beatitudes:

"'And seeing the multitudes, . . . he opened his

mouth, and taught them, saying,

"'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . .

"'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. 5:1–10).

"No other teacher has ever offered the matchless counsel given the multitude on the mount.

"*He is my healer.* I stand in awe at His wondrous miracles. And yet I know they happened. I accept the truth of these things because I know that He is the Master of life and death. The miracles of His ministry bespeak compassion, love, and a sense of humanity wonderful to behold.

"*He is my leader.* I am honored to be one in the long cavalcade of those who love Him and who have followed Him during the two millennia that have passed since His birth. . . .

"*He is my Savior and my Redeemer.* Through giving His life in pain and unspeakable suffering, He has reached down to lift me and each of us and all the sons and daughters

of God from the abyss of eternal darkness following death. He has provided something better—a sphere of light and understanding, growth and beauty where we may go forward on the road that leads to eternal life. My gratitude knows no bounds. My thanks to my Lord has no conclusion.

*“He is my God and my King. From everlasting to everlasting, He will reign and rule as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. To His dominion there will be no end. To His glory there will be no night.*

*“None other can take His place. None other ever will. Unblemished and without fault of any kind, He is the Lamb of God, to whom I bow and through whom I approach my Father in Heaven” (“My Testimony,” *Ensign*, May 2000, 71).*



President Gordon B. Hinckley



# Thomas S. Monson

## Sixteenth President of the Church

# 16

### Highlights in the Life of Thomas S. Monson

Age	Events
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- |    |  |
|----|--|
|    | He was born on August 21, 1927, in Salt Lake City, Utah, to G. Spencer and Gladys Condie Monson.   |
| 12 | He worked part-time with his father at Western Hotel Register Company, a printing firm. This job became a forerunner to his career in the printing industry.   |
| 17 | He enrolled as a freshman at the University of Utah (fall, 1944).  |
| 18 | He entered basic training with the United States Naval Reserve (October 6, 1945).  |
| 19 | He returned home and continued his education.  |
| 21 | He graduated cum laude from the University of Utah with a degree in business management. He began working for the <i>Deseret News</i> . He married Frances Beverly Johnson in the Salt Lake Temple (October 7, 1948).      |
| 22 | He was sustained as bishop of his boyhood ward in Salt Lake City (May 7, 1950).  |
| 26 | He was named assistant general manager of the Deseret News Press.  |
| 27 | He was called as a counselor in the presidency of the Temple View Stake in Salt Lake City (June 16, 1955).   |
| 31 | He was called as president of the Canadian Mission, headquartered in Toronto, Ontario, Canada (February 21, 1959).   |
| 35 | Upon completing his service as mission president, he returned to Salt Lake City. He was named general manager of the Deseret Press. During this time he also served on the Adult Correlation Committee.                    |
| 36 | He was ordained a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (October 10, 1963).  |
| 41 | He served as a member of the National Executive Board of Boy Scouts of America (1969). He continues to serve as a member of this board.  |
| 46 | His first book, <i>Pathways to Perfection</i> , was published (1973).  |
| 47 | He dedicated the land of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) for the advancement of the work of the Lord (April 27, 1975).   |
| 51 | He was named president and chairman of the board of Deseret News Publishing Company.   |
| 54 | He was appointed by President Ronald Reagan to serve on the President's Task Force for Private Sector Initiatives (December 1981).   |
| 55 | He presided over the groundbreaking and site dedication for the Freiberg Germany Temple (April 23, 1983).  |
| 58 | He was called as a counselor to President Ezra Taft Benson (November 10, 1985).  |
| 61 | He, along with other Brethren, met with Erich Honecker, general secretary for the German Democratic Republic, where permission was granted for missionaries to serve in and to serve from that country (October 28, 1988). |
| 66 | He was called as a counselor to President Howard W. Hunter (June 5, 1994).   |
| 67 | He was called as a counselor to President Gordon B. Hinckley (March 12, 1995).   |
| 80 | He became President of the Church (February 3, 2008).  |
| 81 | He celebrated his 60th wedding anniversary with his wife, Frances; he dedicated the new Church History Library.  |
| 85 | He announced a change in missionary age—young men eligible at age 18 and young women at age 19 (October 2012).   |
| 85 | His wife, Frances J. Monson, died (May 17, 2013).  |



Family of G. Spencer and Gladys Condie Monson

## He Received a Legacy of Pioneer Faith [16.1]

**President Thomas S. Monson** shared the following account of his pioneer heritage:

"In the spring of 1848, my great-great-grandparents, Charles Stewart Miller and Mary McGowan Miller, who had joined the Church in their native Scotland, left their home in Rutherglen, Scotland, and journeyed to St. Louis, Missouri, with a group of Saints, arriving there in 1849. . . .

"While the family was in St. Louis working to earn enough money to complete their journey to the Salt Lake Valley, a plague of cholera swept through the area, leaving death and heartache in its wake. The Miller family was hard hit. In the space of two weeks, four of the family members succumbed. The first, on June 22, 1849, was 18-year-old William. Five days later Mary McGowan Miller, my great-great-grandmother and the mother of the family, died. Two days afterward, 15-year-old Archibald passed away, and five days after his death, my great-great-grandfather, Charles Stewart Miller, the father of the family, succumbed. The children who survived were left orphans, including my great-grandmother Margaret, who was 13 years old at the time. . . .

"Little is recorded of the heartache and struggles of the nine remaining Miller children as they continued to work and save for that journey their parents and brothers would never make. We know that they left St. Louis in the spring of 1850 with four oxen and one wagon, arriving finally in the Salt Lake Valley that same year.

"Others of my ancestors faced similar hardships. Through it all, however, their testimonies remained steadfast and firm. From all of them I received a legacy of total dedication to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Because of these faithful

souls, I stand before you today" ("Looking Back and Moving Forward," *Ensign* and *Liahona*, May 2008, 88–89).

## He Was Grateful for the Faith of His Missionary Grandfather [16.2]

**Elder Thomas S. Monson**, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, expressed gratitude for his missionary heritage by recalling two entries in his grandfather's journal: "I love to read my own grandfather's missionary journal. His first entries are classics. He wrote: 'Today I married in the Salt Lake Temple the girl of my dreams.' The very next night the journal entry read: 'Tonight the bishop called at our house. I have been asked to return to Scandinavia for a two-year mission. Of course I will go, and my sweet wife will remain at home and sustain me.' I am grateful for a missionary heritage" ("The Aaronic Priesthood Pathway," *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 41).

## He Developed Compassion in His Youth [16.3]

**Elder Thomas S. Monson**, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, shared the following example of his mother's influence in helping him develop compassion for others:

"In about my tenth year, as Christmas approached, I yearned as only a boy can yearn for an electric train. My desire was not to receive the economical and everywhere-to-be-found wind-up model train, but rather one that operated through the miracle of electricity.

"The times were those of economic depression, yet Mother and Dad, through some sacrifice, I am sure, presented to me on Christmas morning a beautiful electric train. For hours I operated the transformer, watching the engine first pull its cars forward, then push them backward around the track.



Thomas S. Monson as an infant

"Mother entered the living room and said to me that she had purchased a wind-up train for Widow Hansen's boy, Mark, who lived down the lane. I asked if I could see the train. The engine was short and blocky—not long and sleek like the expensive model I had received.

"However, I did take notice of an oil tanker car which



Thomas S. Monson as a young boy

was part of his inexpensive set. My train had no such car, and pangs of envy began to be felt. I put up such a fuss that Mother succumbed to my pleadings and handed me the oil tanker car. She said, 'If you need it more than Mark, you take it.' I put it with my train set and felt pleased with the result.

"Mother and I took the remaining cars and the engine down to Mark Hansen. The young boy

was a year or two older than I. He had never anticipated such a gift and was thrilled beyond words. He wound the key in his engine, it not being electric like mine, and was overjoyed as the engine and two cars, plus a caboose, went around the track.

"Mother wisely asked, 'What do you think of Mark's train, Tommy?'

"I felt a keen sense of guilt and became very much aware of my selfishness. I said to Mother, 'Wait just a moment—I'll be right back.'

"As swiftly as my legs could carry me, I ran to our home, picked up the oil tanker car plus an additional car of my own, ran back down the lane to the Hansen home, and said joyfully to Mark, 'We forgot to bring two cars which belong to your train.'

"Mark coupled the two extra cars to his set. I watched the engine make its labored way around the track and felt a supreme joy difficult to describe and impossible to forget" ("Your Jericho Road," *Ensign*, May 1977, 72–73).

On another occasion, **Elder Monson** related how his grandfather's example of kindness also influenced him as a boy:

"[Old Bob] was a widower in his eighties when the house in which he was living was to be demolished. I heard him tell my grandfather his plight as the three of us sat on the old front porch swing. With a plaintive voice, he said to grandfather, 'Mr. Condie, I don't know what to do. I have no family. I have no place to go. I have no money.' I wondered how grandfather would answer. Slowly grandfather reached into his pocket and took from it that old leather purse from which, in response to my hounding, he had produced many a penny or nickel for a special treat. This time he removed a key and handed it to Old

Bob. Tenderly he said, 'Bob, here is the key to that house I own next door. Take it. Move in your things. Stay as long as you like. There will be no rent to pay and nobody will ever put you out again.'

"Tears welled up in the eyes of Old Bob, coursed down his cheeks, then disappeared in his long, white beard. Grandfather's eyes were also moist. I spoke no word, but that day my grandfather stood ten feet tall. I was proud to bear his given name. Though I was but a boy, that lesson has influenced my life" ("The Long Line of the Lonely," *Ensign*, May 1981, 48).

## He Learned from an Influential Primary President [16.4]

**President Thomas S. Monson** learned from a Primary leader that love can provide a solution for difficult situations:

"One winter day, I thought back to an experience from my boyhood. I was just eleven. Our Primary president, Melissa, was an older and loving gray-haired lady. One day at Primary, Melissa asked me to stay behind and visit with her. There the two of us sat in the otherwise-empty chapel. She placed her arm about my shoulder and began to cry.



Fishing was a lifelong hobby.

"Surprised, I asked her why she was crying.

"She replied, 'I don't seem to be able to encourage the Trail Builder boys to be reverent during the opening exercises of Primary. Would you be willing to help me, Tommy?'

"I promised Melissa that I would. Strangely to me, but not to Melissa, that ended any problem of reverence in that Primary. She had gone to the source of the problem—me. The solution was love.

"The years flew by. Marvelous Melissa, now in her nineties, lived in a nursing facility in the northwest part of Salt



Thomas S. Monson as a boy

Lake City. Just before Christmas I determined to visit my beloved Primary president. . . .

"I found Melissa in the lunchroom. She was staring at her plate of food, teasing it with the fork she held in her aged hand. Not a bite did she eat. As I spoke to her, my words were met by a benign but blank stare. I took the fork in hand and began to feed Melissa, talking all the time I did so about her service to boys and girls as a Primary worker. There wasn't so much as a glimmer of recognition, far less a spoken word. Two other residents of the nursing home gazed at me with puzzled expressions. At last they spoke, saying, 'Don't talk to her. She doesn't know anyone—even her own family. She hasn't said a word in all the years she's been here.'

"Luncheon ended. My one-sided conversation wound down. I stood to leave. I held her frail hand in mine, gazed into her wrinkled but beautiful countenance, and said, 'God bless you, Melissa. Merry Christmas.'

"Without warning, she spoke the words, 'I know you. You're Tommy Monson, my Primary boy. How I love you.' She pressed my hand to her lips and bestowed on it the kiss of love" ("A Doorway Called Love," *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 69).

## He Learned from Passing the Sacrament [16.5]

**Thomas S. Monson** looked forward to receiving the Aaronic Priesthood and being ordained a deacon. The following account illustrates an early priesthood experience he had:

"I recall the time when I was ordained a deacon. Our bishopric stressed the sacred responsibility which was ours to pass the sacrament. Emphasized were proper dress, a dignified bearing, and the importance of being clean inside and out. As we were taught the procedure in passing the sacrament, we were told how we should assist Louis McDonald, a particular brother in our ward who was afflicted with a palsied condition, that he might have the opportunity to partake of the sacred emblems.

"How I remember being assigned to pass the sacrament to the row where Brother McDonald sat. I was fearful and hesitant as I approached this wonderful brother, and then I saw his smile and the eager expression of gratitude that showed his desire to partake. Holding the tray in my left hand, I took a small piece of bread and pressed it to his lips. The water was later served in the same way. I felt I was on holy ground. And indeed I was. The privilege to pass the sacrament to Brother McDonald made better deacons of us all" ("Do Your Duty—That Is Best," *Ensign* and *Liahona*, Nov. 2005, 56).

## He Saved a Young Woman's Life [16.6]

At an early age **Thomas S. Monson** saw how the hand of God could move in his life. He shared the following experience from his youth of floating a river:



Thomas S. Monson, about age 12

"I learned to swim in the swift-running currents of the Provo River in beautiful Provo Canyon. The 'old swimming hole' was in a deep portion of the river, formed by a large rock which had fallen into the river. . . . The pool was dangerous, what with its depth of sixteen feet, its current, which moved swiftly against the large rock, and the sucking

action of the whirlpools below the rock. It was not a place for a novice or the inexperienced swimmer.

"One warm summer afternoon when I was about twelve or thirteen, I took a large, inflated inner tube from a tractor tire, slung it over my shoulder, and



Thomas S. Monson attended West High School in Salt Lake City, Utah, and excelled in English and history. He was president of the Spanish Club and a sergeant in the ROTC (Reserve Officers Training Corps).

walked barefoot up the railroad track which followed the course of the river. I entered the water about a mile above the swimming hole, sat comfortably in the tube, and enjoyed a leisurely float down the river. The river held no fear for me, for I knew its secrets. . . .

"As my inflated tube bobbed up and down, I was about to enter the swiftest portion of the river just at the head of the swimming hole when I heard frantic cries, 'Save her! Save her!' A young lady swimmer, accustomed to the still waters of a gymnasium swimming pool, had fallen

from the rock into the treacherous whirlpools. None of the party could swim to save her. Suddenly I appeared on the potentially tragic scene. I saw the top of her head disappearing under the water for the third time, there to descend to a watery grave. I stretched forth my hand, grasped her hair, and lifted her over the side of the tube and into my arms. At the pool's lower end, the water was slower as I paddled the tube, with my precious cargo, to her waiting relatives and friends. They threw their arms around the water-soaked girl and kissed her, crying, 'Thank God! Thank God you are safe!' Then they hugged and kissed me. . . . I realized that I had participated in the saving of a life. Heavenly Father had heard the cries, 'Save her! Save her,' and permitted me, a deacon, to float by at precisely the time I was needed. That day I learned that the sweetest feeling in mortality is to realize that God, our Heavenly Father, knows each one of us and generously permits us to see and to share His divine power to save" ("Who Honors God, God Honors," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 48–49).

## He Was Given a Lesson in Priesthood Leadership [16.7]

**President Thomas S. Monson** recalled how an Aaronic Priesthood adviser helped him learn as a young man the importance of reaching out in love to help others return to Church activity:

"Not long after my ordination as a teacher in the Aaronic Priesthood, I was called to serve as president of the quorum. Our adviser, Harold, was interested in us, and we knew it. One day he said to me, 'Tom, you enjoy raising pigeons, don't you?'

"I responded with a warm, 'Yes.'

"Then he proffered, 'How would you like me to give you a pair of purebred Birmingham Roller pigeons?'

"This time I answered, 'Yes, Sir!' You see, the pigeons I had were just the common variety, trapped on the roof of the Grant Elementary School.

"He invited me to come to his home the next evening. The following day was one of the longest in my young life. I was awaiting my adviser's return from work an hour before he arrived home. He took me to his pigeon loft, which was in the upper area of a small barn located at the rear of his yard. As I looked at the most beautiful pigeons I had yet seen, he said, 'Select any male, and I will give you a female which is different from any other pigeon in the world.' I made my selection. He then placed in my hand a tiny hen pigeon. I asked what made her so different. He responded, 'Look carefully, and you'll notice that she has but one eye.' Sure enough, one eye was missing, a cat having done the damage. 'Take them home to your loft,' he counseled. 'Keep them in for about 10 days, and then turn them out to see if they will remain at your place.'



Thomas S. Monson with two of his pigeons

"I followed Harold's instructions. Upon his release, the male pigeon strutted about the roof of the loft, then returned inside to eat. But the one-eyed female was gone in an instant. I called Harold and asked, 'Did that one-eyed pigeon return to your loft?'

"'Come on over,' he said, 'and we'll have a look.'

"As we walked from his kitchen door to the loft, my adviser commented, 'Tom, you are the president of the teachers quorum.' This, of course, I already knew. Then he added, 'What are you going to do to activate Bob, who is a member of your quorum?'

"I answered, 'I'll have him at quorum meeting this week.'

"Then he reached up to a special nest and handed me the one-eyed pigeon. 'Keep her in a few more days and try again.' This I did, and once more she disappeared. Again the experience: 'Come on over, and we'll see if she returned home.' Came the comment as we walked to the loft: 'Congratulations on getting Bob to priesthood meeting. Now what are you and Bob going to do to activate Bill?'

"'We'll have him there next week,' I volunteered.

"This experience was repeated over and over again. I was a grown man before I fully realized that indeed Harold, my adviser, had given me a special pigeon, the only pigeon in his loft he knew would return every time she was released. It was his inspired way of having an ideal personal priesthood interview with the president of the teachers quorum every two weeks. I owe a lot to that one-eyed pigeon. I owe more to that quorum adviser. He had the patience and the skill to help me prepare for the responsibilities which lay ahead" ("Anxiously Engaged," *Ensign* and *Liahona*, Nov. 2004, 56–57).

## He Was Called Upon to Use the Priesthood While Serving in the Military [16.8]

Upon reaching his 18th birthday, Thomas S. Monson joined the United States Naval Reserve and was stationed in San Diego, California. His daughter related her father's honorable character at this particular time in his life:

"This was a time when, as a young man, he chose to stand firm against every temptation of the adversary. . . . He chose to stand tall, and sometimes alone, and be numbered as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ. He did not visit Tijuana[, Mexico,] with the other young men; he did not swear or gamble; he obeyed the Word of Wisdom; he did his work well; he attended church. . . . He honored and used his priesthood. He made the choice to keep the Lord's commandments" (Ann M. Dibb, "My Father Is a Prophet" [Brigham Young University–Idaho devotional, Feb. 19, 2008], [www.byui.edu/](http://www.byui.edu/)



In his naval uniform

Presentations/Transcripts/Devotionals/2008\_02\_19\_Dibb.htm).

### President Monson

recalled an experience in exercising priesthood power during basic training while stationed near San Diego, California:

"The night preceding our Christmas leave, our thoughts were, as always, on home. The barracks were quiet. Suddenly I

became aware that my buddy in the adjoining bunk—a member of the Church, Leland Merrill—was moaning in pain. I asked, 'What's the matter, Merrill?'

"He replied, 'I'm sick. I'm really sick.'

"I advised him to go to the base dispensary, but he answered knowingly that such a course would prevent him from being home for Christmas. I then suggested he be quiet so that we didn't awaken the entire barracks.

"The hours lengthened; his groans grew louder. Then, in desperation, he whispered, 'Monson, aren't you an elder?' I acknowledged this to be so, whereupon he pleaded, 'Give me a blessing.'

"I became very much aware that I had never given a blessing. I had never received such a blessing; I had never witnessed a blessing being given. My prayer to God was a plea for help. The answer came: 'Look in the bottom of the seabag.' Thus, at 2:00 a.m. I emptied on the deck the contents of the bag. I then took to the night-light that hard, rectangular object, *The Missionary's Hand Book*, [which had been placed at the bottom of the bag to help keep his clothes firm,] and read how one blesses the sick.



Thomas S. Monson with friends

With about 120 curious sailors looking on, I proceeded with the blessing. Before I could stow my gear, Leland Merrill was sleeping like a child.

“The next morning, Merrill smilingly turned to me and said, ‘Monson, I’m glad you hold the priesthood!’ His gladness was only surpassed by my gratitude—gratitude not only for the priesthood but for being worthy to receive the help I required in a time of desperate need and to exercise the power of the priesthood” (“The Priesthood—a Sacred Gift,” *Ensign* and *Liahona*, May 2007, 58).

## He Courted Frances Johnson [16.9]

**Thomas S. Monson** received an unexpected reception from his future in-laws when he began to court Frances Johnson. He explained:

“The first day I saw Frances, I knew I’d found the right one. The Lord brought us together later, and I asked her to go out with me. I went to her home to call on her. She introduced me, and her father said, “‘Monson’—that’s a Swedish name, isn’t it?”

“I said, ‘Yes.’

“He said, ‘Good.’



Thomas and Frances Monson on their wedding day, October 7, 1948



Thomas and Frances Monson

“Then he went into another room and brought out a picture of two missionaries with their top hats and their copies of the Book of Mormon.

“‘Are you related to this Monson,’ he said, ‘Elias Monson?’

“I said, ‘Yes, he’s my grandfather’s brother. He too was a missionary in Sweden.’

“Her father wept. He wept easily. He said, ‘He and his companion were the missionaries who taught the gospel to my mother and my father and all of my brothers and sisters and to me’” (“Abundantly Blessed,” *Ensign* and *Liahona*, May 2008, 111).

## His Wife, Frances, Has Been a Constant Support [16.10]

The romance between Thomas Monson and Frances Johnson flourished, and they were married in the Salt Lake Temple on October 7, 1948. Sister Monson described how she supported her husband’s Church service from the early years of their marriage: “Tom was serving as ward clerk, then as superintendent of the YMMIA [Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Association] when we were first married, and he has gone from one assignment to another since then. . . . Some have asked how a new bride adjusts to that, but it has never been a sacrifice to see my husband doing the Lord’s work. It has blessed me, and it has blessed our children. He always knew that if it was for the Church, I expected him to do what he had to do” (quoted in Jeffrey R. Holland, “President Thomas S. Monson: Man of Action, Man of Faith, Always ‘on the Lord’s Errand,’” *Ensign*, Feb. 1986, 14).

Because of her husband’s Church callings, which began very early in their marriage, Sister Monson has rarely sat next to her husband during 60 years of Church meetings.



Thomas and Frances Monson with their children, Tom, Clark, and Ann, about 1960

"But," **President Monson** noted, "never once has she complained. . . . Never once. Not in our entire married life has she done anything to keep me from any aspect of my service. I have never received anything but support and encouragement from Frances" (quoted in Jeffrey R. Holland, "President Thomas S. Monson: Finishing the Course, Keeping the Faith," *Ensign*, Sept. 1994, 16).

Speaking of her mother's influence, Ann Monson Dibb stated: "As we were growing up, my father's responsibilities as a member of the Council of the Twelve often took him away from home. Many times Dad would be touring missions around the world, gone for five or six weeks at a time. Mother conveyed to us that he was doing his duty and that we would be watched over and protected whenever he was away. She communicated this message to us not only with words but by her quiet manner of making sure everything which needed to be done was always accomplished. My mother is unlike many of the women of today's generation. Instead of looking for the recognition of the world, she has always received her acknowledgment of worth from such things as the happy smile of a son or the outstretched hand of a grandchild. . . . As I reflect upon the many blessings which I have received as the daughter of an Apostle of the Lord, the one which means the most to me is the gift and blessing of the woman he married, my mother" (quoted in Holland, "President Monson: Finishing the Course," 16).

## He Was an Attentive Father [16.11]

"Even though their father has been very busy all of their lives, the three Monson children do not see themselves as having been slighted. 'Other children's fathers seemed to be home more than our dad was,' they remembered, 'but they didn't seem to do as much with their children as Dad did with us. We were always doing something together, and we cherish those memories.'

"The Monsons' oldest son, Tom, said he hardly ever had free time with his dad during those demanding years in the Canadian Mission (the Monsons had three days in three years when they ate alone as a family, exclusive of missionaries or other mission guests). Nevertheless, every night before young Tommy went to bed, he would go upstairs to his father's office and whatever his dad was doing would be put aside in deference to a game of checkers. 'In its own way, that memory is as sweet to me as the one I have of my father flying all the way to Louisville, Kentucky, years later to give me a blessing against the pneumonia I had contracted during my military basic training there,' Tom said.



Thomas and Frances Monson raised a successful family.

"Ann remembers that . . . he made his children feel part of his ministry and invariably shared spiritual experiences from his assignments. 'My fondest memories,' she says, 'are of him coming home Sunday evenings after a stake conference assignment or mission tour and hearing him tell of the special inspiration he had in calling a patriarch or of the faith-promoting experiences he had interviewing

missionaries.' There were plenty of such stories for the Monson children to enjoy because daily, weekly, monthly their father was having special impressions and inspired promptings regarding calls to be extended and actions to be taken.

"Clark was deeply touched when, on a typically marvelous Monson fishing experience, his father asked him to reel in his line for a moment. When the lines were in and the rods set aside in the boat, Brother Monson said, 'In about



The Monson family in 1982

five minutes your brother Tom will be sitting down to take the bar exam admitting him to the practice of law. He has worked hard through three years of law school for this and he will be a little apprehensive. Let's just kneel here in the boat. I'll offer a prayer for him, and then you offer one.'

"That was one of the greatest experiences of my life,' Clark later reported. He was also deeply touched years later when his father turned the car around and drove forty miles out of his way to let Clark get a good look at a hawk's nest located near Randolph, Utah. 'I guess I shouldn't have been surprised that he would do that. It's exactly the kind of thing he has done all his life for those he sees in need'" (Holland, "President Monson: Man of Action," 16–17).

Years later, **President Thomas S. Monson** said to fathers, "I would encourage you to be available to your children. I have heard it said that no man, as death approaches, has

ever declared that he wished he had spent more time at the office." He then counseled, "My brothers and sisters, time with your children is fleeting. Do not put off being with them now" ("Constant Truths for Changing Times," *Ensign* and *Liahona*, May 2005, 20–21).

## He Was a Man of Faith [16.12]

Ann Monson Dibb shared an account of her father's faith:

"A powerful example of my father's faith took place after my mother experienced a severe injury. She had fallen, hit her head, and was in a coma for three weeks. My father was very concerned and prayed continually. He was given a small room at the hospital, called a Comfort Room, and had all of his work sent to him. He visited my mother every hour and spoke to her. His faith and prayers were answered. She awoke from the coma.

"Not long afterwards, her doctor started explaining to my father and me what we could expect in terms of a recovery. He was not very optimistic. My father interrupted the doctor in mid-sentence and asked, 'Doctor, do you have faith? Do you believe in miracles?' The doctor stammered and did not know how to respond. Then my father continued, 'Well, I do. We're going to continue in our faith. We are going to pray. Frances will be in the Lord's hands, and along with all of the capable medical help, we believe the Lord will help her recover.'

"With diligent care, therapy and time, my mother did make a remarkable recovery. Seeing this, several medical professionals acknowledged that my mother's recovery was a miracle" ("My Father Is a Prophet").



Thomas S. Monson about the time he was bishop



Thomas S. Monson with co-workers at Deseret News Press

## He Showed Compassion to the Less Fortunate [16.13]

Ann Monson Dibb shared the following example of learning compassion from her father:

“My father’s friends come from all walks of life. I’d like to tell you about one of my father’s friends who would have been considered by others to be ‘one of the least of these my brethren.’ His name was Ed Erickson. He was almost twenty years older than my father. Ed was born prematurely and experienced some of the complications that accompanied premature births almost a century ago. Ed couldn’t see very well, and he never had the opportunity to study and learn at a university. Yet, my father said Ed always had the scriptures open by his reading chair. He went to work at an early age to help support his widowed mother. He worked for the street department of Salt Lake City doing manual labor his entire working career. He never married, he never drove a car, and even when he was 90 years old, he would walk everywhere he went—usually about eight miles every day. . . .

“My father was a loyal friend and actively sought to find ways for Ed to feel valued. Dad frequently hired Ed to help him clean his pigeon coops and do manual chores in our large yard. I must say that I didn’t always feel comfortable around Ed. He was a big man, he looked different, and he didn’t talk very much. Ed just did his work, ate dinner with us, and then Dad would take him home. This happened several times each year. In later years, when my father would get tickets to take his grandchildren to the circus or to the rodeo, Ed always came, too, sharing our popcorn and drinks.

“I was so amazed when *Salt Lake City Magazine* ran a feature on my father and Ed Erickson was quoted in the article. He stated the highest tribute I’ve ever read concerning my father. He said:

“‘If the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ himself had chosen an apostle, he wouldn’t have done a better job than Brother McKay did when he chose Tom Monson’” (“My Father Is a Prophet”).

**Elder Thomas S. Monson**, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught in a general conference of the Church, “As we resolve to minister more diligently to those in need, let us remember to include our children in these learning lessons of life” (“The Long Line of the Lonely,” 47).

## As a Caring Bishop, He Searched Out the Less Active [16.14]

At the age of 22, after less than two years of marriage, **Thomas S. Monson** was sustained as bishop of his ward. Just as he had done as a young Aaronic Priesthood holder, he sought out the less active to bring them back into the fold. He described seeking out a young priest in his ward who was absent from priesthood quorum meeting:

“When I served as a bishop, I noted one Sunday morning that one of our priests was missing from priesthood meeting. I left the quorum in the care of the adviser and visited Richard’s home. His mother said he was working at the West Temple Garage.

“I drove to the garage in search of Richard and looked everywhere, but I could not find him. Suddenly I had the inspiration to gaze down into the old-fashioned grease pit situated at the side of the station. From the darkness



Bishop Thomas S. Monson with his counselors

I could see two shining eyes. Then I heard Richard say, 'You found me, Bishop! I'll come up.' After that he rarely missed a priesthood meeting." President Monson went on to tell that since that time in the grease pit, Richard went on to serve a full-time mission in Mexico and later served as a bishop. ("They Will Come," *Ensign*, May 1997, 46.)

## He Learned to Respond to the Promptings of the Spirit [16.15]

Thomas S. Monson learned the importance of hearkening to the whisperings of the Spirit:

"Twenty-three-year-old Tom Monson, relatively new bishop of the Sixth-Seventh Ward in the Temple View Stake, was uncharacteristically restless as the stake priesthood leadership meeting progressed. He had the distinct impression that he should leave the meeting immediately and drive to the Veterans' Hospital high up on the Avenues of Salt Lake City. Before leaving home that night he had received a telephone call informing him that an older member of his ward was ill and had been admitted to the hospital for care. Could the bishop, the caller wondered, find a moment to go by the hospital sometime and give a blessing? The busy young leader explained that he was just on his way to a stake meeting but that he certainly would be pleased to go by the hospital as soon as the meeting was concluded.

"Now the prompting was stronger than ever: 'Leave the meeting and proceed to the hospital at once.' But the stake president himself was speaking at the pulpit! It would be most discourteous to stand in the middle of the presiding officer's message, make one's way over an entire row of brethren, and then exit the building altogether. Painfully he waited out the final moments of the stake president's message, then bolted for the door even before the benediction had been pronounced.

"Running the full length of the corridor on the fourth floor of the hospital, the young bishop saw a flurry of activity outside the designated room. A nurse stopped him and said, 'Are you Bishop Monson?'"

"'Yes,' was the anxious reply.

"'I'm sorry,' she said. 'The patient was calling your name just before he passed away.'

"Fighting back the tears, Thomas S. Monson turned and walked back into the night. He vowed then and there that he would never again fail to act upon a prompting from the Lord. He would acknowledge the impressions of the Spirit when they came, and he would follow wherever they led him, ever to be 'on the Lord's errand'" (Holland, "President Monson: Man of Action," 11).



Thomas S. Monson with President David O. McKay and an unidentified man

## "They All Knew He Would Come, and He Always Did" [16.16]

Thomas S. Monson practiced "pure religion," as described in James 1:27; he gladly accepted the responsibility to "visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction." As a young bishop of a ward with more than 1,000 members, he cared for 87 widows (see "Do Your Duty," 59). From the first year of his calling until the last of the widows died, he and his wife visited each of them at Christmastime, always taking a personal gift to each one of them. "For the first several years the gift he would take them was one of the Barred Plymouth Rock or Rhode Island Red hens raised and dressed out by him in his own poultry coops" (Holland, "President Monson: Man of Action," 12).

"His lifelong friend John Burt says, 'Tom's care of the widows who lived in his ward—eighty-seven of them—is an example of his loyalty and devotion to people. When the rest of us were released as bishops, we just kind of moved on to the next task and left the widows to our successors. Not Tom. He somehow found time to keep visiting them [even after he was released]. He is the most loyal man I know.' . . .

". . . In one of the many Salt Lake City rest homes he has come to know so intimately, he found one of his ward members, alone and silent in the darkened room of a world made even darker by the onset of blindness. As President Monson made his way to this sweet sister's side, she reached out awkwardly, groping for the hand of the only visitor she had received in the whole of the Christmas season. 'Bishop, is that you?' she inquired. 'Yes, dear Hattie, it is I.' 'Oh, Bishop,' she wept through sightless eyes, 'I knew *you* would come.' They all knew he would come, and he always did" (Holland, "President Monson: Finishing the Course," 13–14).

## “Have Courage, My Boy, to Say Yes” [16.17]

**President Thomas S. Monson** shared the following experience of his calling to be a counselor in the presidency of the Temple View Stake:

“I was serving as a bishop at the time. The general session of our stake conference was being held in the Assembly Hall on Temple Square in Salt Lake City. Our stake presidency was to be reorganized. The Aaronic Priesthood, including members of bishoprics, were providing the music for the conference. As we concluded singing our first selection, President Joseph Fielding Smith, our conference visitor, stepped to the pulpit and read for sustaining approval the names of the new stake presidency. He then mentioned that Percy Fetzner, who became our new stake president, and John Burt, who became the first counselor—each of whom had been counselors in the previous presidency—had been made aware of their new callings before the conference began. However, he indicated that I, who had been called to be second counselor in the new presidency, had no previous knowledge of the calling and was hearing of it for the first time as my name was read for sustaining vote. He then announced, ‘If Brother Monson is willing to respond to this call, we will be pleased to hear from him now.’

“As I stood at the pulpit and gazed out on that sea of faces, I remembered the song we had just sung. It pertained to the Word of Wisdom and was titled ‘Have Courage, My Boy, to Say No.’ That day I selected as my acceptance theme ‘Have Courage, My Boy, to Say Yes.’ The call for courage comes constantly to each of us—the courage to stand firm for our convictions, the courage to fulfill our responsibilities, the courage to honor our priesthood” (“The Priesthood,” 57).

## He Was Called to Be a Mission President [16.18]

Thomas S. Monson’s “early career in advertising sales and management . . . was interrupted by service as president of the Canadian Mission from 1959 to 1962. The mission covered a very large geographical area, with no stakes and few adequate buildings.

“‘He had a dramatic impact on that mission,’ remembers former missionary F. Wayne Chamberlain. ‘Here he was, younger than some of the full-time elders. But the minute he arrived in Toronto he was in charge. In one quick tour of the mission he knew every missionary’s name and many of the members. He lifted everyone, everywhere he went—he completely energized the entire mission. With

what I saw there, I truly believe he could have become the successful chief executive officer of any major corporation in the world.’ Needless to say, the work of the Church flourished in eastern Canada under this young president’s direction” (Holland, “President Monson: Man of Action,” 14).

## He Was Called to Be an Apostle [16.19]

Called to be an Apostle by President David O. McKay at the age of 36, **Thomas S. Monson** was 17 years younger than the next youngest member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. In his first address at a general conference of the Church he said:

“Some years ago I stood at a pulpit and noticed a little sign that only the speaker could see, and the words on that sign were these: ‘Who stands at this pulpit, let him

be humble.’ How I pray to my Heavenly Father that I might never forget the lesson I learned that day! . . .

“My sincere prayer today, President McKay, is that I might always obey you and these, my brethren. I pledge my life, all that I may have. I will strive to the utmost of my ability to be what you would want me to be” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1963, 14).



Thomas S. Monson about the time of his call to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

## His Ministry Was Characterized by Following the Promptings of the Spirit in Serving the One [16.20]

**Elder Jeffrey R. Holland** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shared the following experience illustrating President Monson’s commitment to follow the promptings of the Spirit and to reach out in compassion to the individual:

“A telephone call came to President Monson’s office from the son of an 82-year-old woman who was nearing death. The mother’s final and only request was that she might meet her ‘favorite General Authority’ before she passed away. . . . One of the secretaries [took] this particular call, carefully noting the details and promising to relay the message to President Monson. She also courteously mentioned that President Monson’s time commitments



The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1970

were overwhelming, so the elderly sister would certainly be in President Monson's prayers even if he were not able to make a personal visit. The faithful son hung up the telephone, very grateful for and fully satisfied with the response he had received.

"The message was relayed. The schedule, overflowing as always, precluded a visit. A day went by, and President Monson began to be restless. That night he was more restless still. On the second day, he could not resist. He got into his car and headed for an unfamiliar address to visit a dying woman he had never met.

"Wending his way through streets and side roads and neighborhoods totally unfamiliar, President Monson eventually arrived at his destination. Knocking at the door, he introduced himself to that very surprised son and handed him a green planter purchased for the visit. He was then ushered into a modest bedroom where a newfound friend was entering a comatose state, hovering between life and death. Quietly President Monson sat on the edge of the bed and held her hand. He talked softly and lovingly to her at great length about a wide variety of gospel principles. . . . A blessing was given,

and then President Monson, noting but not mentioning a framed picture of himself on the modest mantelpiece, excused himself from the room. The sweet sister died nine hours later, having realized the one final wish she had in this life. . . . Following such spiritual promptings, often in the briefest and most crucial window of opportunity, has become one of the most important hallmarks of Thomas S. Monson's life and ministry" ("President Monson: Finishing the Course," 14).

## He Always Cared for the Sick and Afflicted [16.21]

**President Dieter F. Uchtdorf** of the First Presidency shared an experience illustrating President Thomas S. Monson's love and compassion:

"Some years ago, President Monson came to a regional conference in Hamburg, Germany, and it was my honor to accompany him. President Monson has a remarkable memory, and we talked about many of the Saints in Germany—I was amazed that he remembered so many so well.

"President Monson asked about Brother Michael Panitsch, a former stake president and then a patriarch, who had been one of the stalwart pioneers of the Church in Germany. I told him that Brother Panitsch was seriously ill, that he was bedridden and unable to attend our meetings.

"President Monson asked if we could pay him a visit.

"I knew that shortly before his trip to Hamburg, President Monson had undergone foot surgery and that he could not walk without pain. I explained that Brother Panitsch lived on the fifth floor of a building with no elevators. We would have to climb the stairs to see him.

"But President Monson insisted. And so we went.

"I remember how difficult it was for President Monson to climb those stairs. He could take only a few at a time before needing to stop and rest. He never uttered a word of complaint, and he would not turn back. . . .

"Once there, we had a wonderful visit. President Monson thanked [Brother Panitsch] for his life of dedicated service and cheered him with a smile. Before we left, he gave him a wonderful priesthood blessing. . . .

"President Monson could have chosen to rest between our long and frequent meetings. He could have asked to see some of the beautiful sights of Hamburg. I have often thought of how remarkable it was that of all the sights in that city, the one he wanted to see more than any other was a feeble and ailing member of the Church who had faithfully and humbly served the Lord.

"President Monson came to Hamburg to teach and bless the people of a country, and that is what he did. But at the same time, he focused on the one, name by name. His vision is so broad and far-reaching to grasp the complexities of a worldwide Church, yet he is also so compassionate to focus on the one" ("Faith of Our Father," *Ensign* and *Liahona*, May 2008, 69–70).

## He Worked on the Latter-day Saint Editions of the Scriptures [16.22]

As a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Elder Thomas S. Monson was the chairman of the Scriptures Publication Committee that oversaw the development of the LDS edition of the King James Version of the Bible. With his many years in the printing and publishing business, Elder Monson played a key role on this committee. Published for the first time in 1979, this edition of the King James Bible was cross-referenced with the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. Features also included a



new, innovative system of footnoting, a topical guide, a Bible dictionary, maps, and new chapter headings. More than 600 passages from the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible were also included in this edition of the Bible.

During the October 1982 general conference, Elder Boyd K. Packer, before he became President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, made the official announcement that publication of the new editions of the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price had begun in 1981 and that the subtitle "Another Testament of Jesus Christ" was added to the Book of Mormon (see "Scriptures," *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 53).

These new editions brought renewed attention to the scriptures and helped change the way Church members studied them. Of his work on the committee, **President Monson** later wrote in his journal, "This is one of the major contributions during my service as a general authority." And later he said, "The work was prodigious. I think it's one of the finest projects I've ever seen" (quoted in Ted Walch, "New Edition of Scriptures Was Unifying Force," *Deseret News*, Feb. 26, 2005, B4).

## He Served the Church in the German Democratic Republic [16.23]

In 1968, East Germany, officially the German Democratic Republic, was under communist rule. Religion was repressed throughout the country. During that year **Elder Thomas S. Monson** made his first visit to that country to meet with Church members. He later recalled:

“We assembled in a small and ancient building. As the members sang the hymns of Zion, they literally filled the hall with their faith and devotion.

“My heart was filled with sorrow when I realized the members had no patriarch, no wards or stakes—just branches. They could not receive temple blessings—either endowment or sealing. No official visitor had come from Church headquarters in a long time. The members could not leave their country. Yet they trusted in the Lord with all their hearts.

“I stood at the pulpit, and with tear-filled eyes and a voice choked with emotion, I made a promise to the people: ‘If you will remain true and faithful to the commandments of God, every blessing any member of the Church enjoys in any other country will be yours.’ Then I realized what I had said. That night, I dropped to my knees and pleaded with my Heavenly Father, ‘Father, I’m on Thy errand; this is Thy Church. I have spoken words that came not from me but from Thee and Thy Son. Wilt Thou fulfill the promise in the lives of this noble people.’ Thus concluded my first visit to the German Democratic Republic.”

Seven years later **Elder Monson** returned to rededicate that country for the preaching of the gospel:

“On a Sunday morning, April 27, 1975, I stood on an outcropping of rock situated between the cities of Dresden and Meissen, high above the Elbe River, and offered a prayer on the land and its people. That prayer

noted the faith of the members. It emphasized the tender feelings of many hearts filled with an overwhelming desire to obtain temple blessings. A plea for peace was expressed. Divine help was requested. I spoke the words: ‘Dear Father, let this be the beginning of a new day for the members of Thy Church in this land.’

“Suddenly, from far below in the valley, a bell in a church steeple began to chime and the shrill crow of a rooster broke the morning silence, each heralding the commencement of a new day.”

Alongside other general and local Church officials, Elder Monson worked with government officials to allow the blessings of the temple to be made available to the Saints in East Germany: “We explored every possibility. A trip once in a lifetime to the temple in Switzerland? Not approved by the government. Perhaps mother and father could come to Switzerland, leaving the children behind. Not right. How do you seal children to parents when they cannot kneel at an altar? It was a tragic situation. Then, through the fasting and the prayers of many members, and in a most natural manner, government leaders proposed: Rather than having your people go to Switzerland to visit a temple, why don’t you build a temple here in the German Democratic Republic? The proposal was accepted, a choice parcel of property obtained in Freiberg, and ground broken for a beautiful temple of God.”

The Freiberg Germany Temple was dedicated on June 29, 1985. “A miracle of miracles had taken place. One more was needed. How can the Church grow without missionaries?”

Elder Monson and other Church leaders sought “permission for the doorway of missionary work to open.”

Recalling a 1988 meeting that took place with the leaders of the German Democratic Republic wherein Church authorities sought for missionary privileges inside the borders of that communist-controlled country, **President Monson** said:

“Chairman [Erich] Honecker [the head of the nation] began, ‘We know members of your Church believe in work; you’ve proven that. We know you believe in the family; you’ve demonstrated that. We know you are good citizens in whatever country you claim as home; we have observed that. The floor is yours. Make your desires known.’

“I began, ‘Chairman Honecker, at the dedication and open house for the temple in Freiberg, 89,890 of your countrymen stood in line, at times up to four hours, frequently in the rain, that they might see a house of God. In the city of Leipzig, at the dedication of the stake center, 12,000 people attended the open house. In the city of Dresden there were 29,000 visitors; in the city of Zwickau, 5,300. And every week of the year 1,500



Freiberg Germany Temple

to 1,800 people visit the temple grounds in the city of Freiberg. They want to know what we believe. We would like to tell them that we believe in honoring and obeying and sustaining the law of the land. We would like to explain our desire to achieve strong family units. These are but two of our beliefs. We cannot answer questions, and we cannot convey our feelings, because we have no missionary representatives here as we do in other countries. The young men and young women whom we would like to have come to your country as missionary representatives would love your nation and your people. More particularly, they would leave an influence with your people which would be ennobling. Then we would like to see young men and young women from your nation who are members of our Church serve as missionary representatives in many nations, such as in America, in Canada, and in a host of others. They will return better prepared to assume positions of responsibility in your land.'

"Chairman Honecker then spoke for perhaps thirty minutes, describing his objectives and viewpoints and detailing the progress made by his nation. At length, he smiled and addressed me and the group, saying, 'We know you. We trust you. We have had experience with you. Your missionary request is approved.' . . .

"The black darkness of night had ended. The bright light of day had dawned. The gospel of Jesus Christ would now be carried to the millions of people in that nation" ("Thanks Be to God," *Ensign*, May 1989, 50–53).

On March 30, 1989, the first full-time missionaries called to serve in the German Democratic Republic entered that country. On May 28, 1989, full-time missionaries called from the German Democratic Republic arrived at the Provo Missionary Training Center to begin their service. This all preceded the beginning of the Berlin Wall being taken down on November 9, 1989.

## He Fulfilled Many Important Assignments as an Apostle [16.24]

While serving as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Elder Thomas S. Monson fulfilled many assignments that utilized his natural leadership talents. Though not limited to these, he served as chairman of the following committees: Adult Correlation Committee, Youth and Young Adult Correlation Committee, Leadership Training Committee, Missionary Executive Committee, Scriptures Publication Committee, Priesthood Executive Council, International Communications Committee, and Organizational Studies Committee. He also received assignments to supervise



Thomas S. Monson in the South Pacific

the Church in the South Pacific, Mexico, Northwest United States, and Europe. He supervised the Church in East Germany for nearly 20 years.

## He Was Called as a Counselor in the First Presidency [16.25]

After serving 22 years in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, in November 1985 Thomas S. Monson was called to serve as second counselor to President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994). In June 1994 he was called as second counselor to President Howard W. Hunter (1907–1995), and in March 1995 he was called as first counselor to President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) for a combined 22 years as a counselor to three Church presidents.

**Elder Bruce R. McConkie** (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles once described President Monson



With President Gordon B. Hinckley and President Ezra Taft Benson at the priesthood session of April 1989 general conference

as “a genius in Church government” (quoted in Holland, “President Monson: Finishing the Course,” 17). **Elder Boyd K. Packer**, before he became President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, similarly stated: “He is a genius at organization. . . . If I were to choose someone to steer an important matter successfully through all the necessary channels and past all the necessary checkpoints, I would choose Tom Monson” (quoted in Holland, “President Monson: Man of Action,” 15).

## “Whom the Lord Calls, the Lord Qualifies” [16.26]

**President Thomas S. Monson** testified that the Lord will assist us in doing His work: “Some of you may be shy by nature or consider yourselves inadequate to respond affirmatively to a calling. 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. Remember that whom the Lord calls, the Lord qualifies” (“Duty Calls,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 44).

## He Taught Service to Others [16.27]

**President Thomas S. Monson** encouraged everyone to be mindful of opportunities to serve:

“There are many out there who plead and pray for help. There are those who are discouraged, those who are beset by poor health and challenges of life which leave them in despair.

“I’ve always believed in the truth of the words, ‘God’s sweetest blessings always go by hands that serve him here below.’ Let us have ready hands, clean hands, and willing hands, that we may participate in providing what our Heavenly Father would have others receive from Him” (“Priesthood Power,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 51).

## He Taught about Priesthood Activation [16.28]

**President Monson** taught how priesthood holders who have wandered off can be brought back to activity in the Church:

“When I visited stake conferences as a member of the Twelve, I always took note of those stakes which had excelled in bringing to activity those brethren whose talents and potential leadership had lain dormant. Inevitably I would ask, ‘How were you able to achieve success? What did you do and how did you do it?’ . . .

“The formula was the same, generally speaking, in each successful stake with regard to this phase of the work. It consisted of four ingredients: one, put forth your efforts

at the ward level; two, involve the ward bishop; three, provide inspired teaching; and four, do not attempt to concentrate on all the brethren at once; rather, work with a few husbands and their wives at a given time and then have them help you as you work with others.

“High-powered sales techniques are not the answer in priesthood leadership; rather, devotion to duty, continuous effort, abundant love, and personal spirituality combine to touch the heart, prompt the change, and bring to the table of the Lord His hungry children who have wandered in the wilderness of the world but who now have returned ‘home’” (“The Priesthood—A Sacred Trust,” *Ensign*, May 1994, 52).



The First Presidency: Thomas S. Monson, Gordon B. Hinckley, and James E. Faust, October 2005

## He Strengthened Those Enduring Tragedy and Adversity [16.29]

To those experiencing discouragement, **President Thomas S. Monson** testified of God’s love:

“In our lives, sickness comes to loved ones, accidents leave their cruel marks of remembrance, and tiny legs that once ran are imprisoned in a wheelchair.

“Mothers and fathers who anxiously await the arrival of a precious child sometimes learn that all is not well with this tiny infant. A missing limb, sightless eyes, a damaged brain, or the term ‘Down’s syndrome’ greets the parents, leaving them baffled, filled with sorrow, and reaching out for hope.

“There follows the inevitable blaming of oneself, the condemnation of a careless action, and the perennial questions: ‘Why such a tragedy in our family?’ ‘Why didn’t I keep her home?’ ‘If only he hadn’t gone to that party.’ ‘How did this happen?’ ‘Where was God?’ ‘Where was a protecting angel?’ *If, why, where, how*—those recurring words do not bring back the lost son, the perfect body, the plans of parents, or the dreams of youth.



Thomas S. Monson with his wife, Frances, in front of the Nauvoo Illinois Temple at the time of the dedication, June 2002

Self-pity, personal withdrawal, or deep despair will not bring the peace, the assurance, or help which are needed. Rather, we must go forward, look upward, move onward, and rise heavenward. . . .

"To all who have suffered silently from sickness, to you who have cared for those with physical or mental impairment, who have borne a heavy burden day by day, year by year, and to you noble mothers and dedicated fathers—I salute you and pray God's blessings to ever attend you. To the children, particularly they who cannot run and play and frolic, come the reassuring words: 'Dearest children, God is near you, Watching o'er you day and night.' (*Hymns*, 1985, no. 96.) . . .

"To any who from anguish of heart and sadness of soul have silently asked, 'Heavenly Father, are you really there? . . . Do you hear and answer every . . . prayer?' (*Children's Songbook*, no. 12), I bear to you my witness that He is

there. He does hear and answer every prayer. His Son, the Christ, burst the bands of our earthly prisons. Heaven's blessings await you" ("Miracles—Then and Now," *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 68–70).

## Our Homes Are to Be Spiritual as Well as Physical Sanctuaries [16.30]

**President Thomas S. Monson** taught that the Spirit of God should reside in our homes:

"It is in the home that we form our attitudes, our deeply held beliefs. It is in the home that hope is fostered or destroyed.

"Our homes are to be more than sanctuaries; they should also be places where God's Spirit can dwell, where the storm stops at the door, where love reigns and peace dwells" ("Becoming Our Best Selves," *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 19).

On another occasion **President Monson** taught:

"Happiness does not consist of a glut of luxury, the world's idea of a 'good time.' Nor must we search for it in faraway places with strange-sounding names. Happiness is found at home.

" . . . The home is the laboratory of our lives, and what we learn there largely determines what we do when we leave there" ("Hallmarks of a Happy Home," *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 69).

## Live within Your Means [16.31]

In a time of economic uncertainty, **President Thomas S. Monson** counseled Church members to live within their means:

"Avoid the philosophy and excuse that yesterday's luxuries have become today's necessities. They aren't necessities unless we ourselves make them such. Many of our young couples today want to begin with multiple cars and the type of home Mother and Dad worked a lifetime to obtain. Consequently, they enter into long-term debt on the basis of two salaries. Perhaps too late they find that changes do come, women have children, sickness stalks some families, jobs are lost, natural disasters and other situations occur, and no longer can the mortgage payment, based on the income from two salaries, be made.

"It is essential for us to live within our means" ("Constant Truths for Changing Times," 20).

## He Taught about the Importance of Our Personal Influence [16.32]

**President Thomas S. Monson** explained that no matter our station in life or our calling, we can have a powerful influence for good:

“The calling of the early Apostles reflected the influence of the Lord. When He sought a man of faith, He did not select him from the throng of the self-righteous who were found regularly in the synagogue. Rather, He called him from among the fishermen of Capernaum. Peter, Andrew, James, and John heard the call, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men’ [Matthew 4:19]. They followed. Simon, man of doubt, became Peter, Apostle of faith.

“When the Savior was to choose a missionary of zeal and power, He found him not among His advocates but amidst His adversaries. Saul of Tarsus—the persecutor—became Paul the proselyter. The Redeemer chose imperfect men to teach the way to perfection. He did so then; He does so now.

“He calls you and me to serve Him here below and sets us to the task He would have us fulfill. The commitment is total. There is no conflict of conscience.

“As we follow that Man of Galilee—even the Lord Jesus Christ—our personal influence will be felt for good wherever we are, whatever our callings” (“Your Personal Influence,” *Ensign* and *Liahona*, May 2004, 20).

## Stay on the Path to Your Eternal Destiny [16.33]

Drawing upon a story from children’s literature, **President Thomas S. Monson** counseled Church members to choose the path that leads to celestial glory:

“As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, our goal is to obtain celestial glory.

“Let us not find ourselves as indecisive as is Alice in Lewis Carroll’s classic *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. You will remember that she comes to a crossroads with two paths before her, each stretching onward but in opposite directions. She is confronted by the Cheshire cat, of whom Alice asks, ‘Which path shall I follow?’



U.S. president Ronald Reagan greeting Thomas S. Monson

“The cat answers: ‘That depends where you want to go. If you do not know where you want to go, it doesn’t matter which path you take’ [adapted from Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1992), 76].

“Unlike Alice, we all know where we want to go, and it *does* matter which way we go, for the path we follow in this life surely leads to the path we will follow in the next” (“Choose You This Day,” *Ensign* and *Liahona*, Nov. 2004, 68).



Visiting with Boy Scouts

## “What Are We Doing with Today?” [16.34]

**President Thomas S. Monson** explained that in order to have happy tomorrows, we need to work today:

“How fragile life; how certain death. We do not know when we will be required to leave this mortal existence. And so I ask, ‘What are we doing with today?’ If we live only for tomorrow, we’ll have a lot of empty yesterdays today. Have we been guilty of declaring, ‘I’ve been thinking about making some course corrections in my life. I plan to take the first step—tomorrow’? With such thinking, tomorrow is forever. Such tomorrows rarely come unless we do something about them today. As the familiar hymn teaches:

*“There are chances for work all around just now,  
Opportunities right in our way.*

*Do not let them pass by, saying, ‘Sometime I’ll try,’*

*But go and do something today.* [Will L. Thompson, “Have I Done Any Good?” *Hymns*, no. 223.]

“Let us ask ourselves the questions: ‘Have I done any good in the world today? Have I helped anyone in need?’ What a formula for happiness! What a prescription for contentment, for inner peace—to have inspired gratitude in another human being.

“Our opportunities to give of ourselves are indeed limitless, but they are also perishable. There are hearts to gladden. There are kind words to say. There are gifts to be given. There are deeds to be done. There are souls to be saved” (“Now Is the Time,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 60).

## He Gave Counsel on How to Pray [16.35]

**President Thomas S. Monson** taught that remembering God's love for us will make it easier to pray sincerely: "As we pray, let us really communicate with our Father in Heaven. It is easy to let our prayers become repetitious, expressing words with little or no thought behind them. When we remember that each of us is literally a spirit son or daughter of God, we will not find it difficult to approach Him in prayer. He knows us; He loves us; He wants what is best for us. Let us pray with sincerity and meaning, offering our thanks and asking for those things we feel we need. Let us listen for His answers, that we may recognize them when they come. As we do, we will be strengthened and blessed. We will come to know Him and His desires for our lives. By knowing Him, by trusting His will, our foundations of faith will be strengthened. If any one of us has been slow to hearken to the counsel to pray always, there is no finer hour to begin than now. William Cowper declared, 'Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees' (in William Neil, comp., *Concise Dictionary of Religious Quotations* [1974], 144)" ("How Firm a Foundation," *Ensign* and *Liahona*, Nov. 2006, 67).



President Thomas S. Monson with his counselors, Henry B. Eyring and Dieter F. Uchtdorf, at a press conference announcing the new First Presidency to the world, February 4, 2008

## He Became President of the Church [16.36]

In his first general conference as President of the Church, **President Thomas S. Monson** testified of his dependence upon the Lord: "My beloved brothers and sisters, over 44 years ago, in October of 1963, I stood at the pulpit in the Tabernacle, having just been sustained as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. On that occasion I mentioned a small sign I had seen on another pulpit. The words on the sign were these: 'Who stands at this pulpit, let him be humble.' I assure you that I was humbled by my call to the Twelve at that time. However, as I stand at *this* pulpit today, I address you from the absolute depths of humility. I feel very keenly my dependence upon the Lord" ("Looking Back and Moving Forward," 87).

## God Directs His Prophet [16.37]

**President Thomas S. Monson** assured members that the Lord directs His Church:

"I know without question, my brothers and sisters, that God lives. I testify to you that this is His work. I testify as well that our Savior Jesus Christ is at the head of this Church, which bears His name. I know that the sweetest experience in all this life is to feel His promptings as He directs us in the furtherance of His work. I felt those promptings as a young bishop, guided to the homes where there was spiritual—or perhaps temporal—want. I felt them again as a mission president in Toronto, Canada, working with wonderful missionaries who were a living witness and testimony to the world that this work is divine and that we are led by a prophet. I have felt them throughout my service in the Twelve and in the First Presidency and now as President of the Church. I testify that each one of us can feel the Lord's inspiration as we live worthily and strive to serve Him. . . .

". . . I have the sure knowledge . . . that God directs His prophet. My earnest prayer is that I might continue to be a worthy instrument in His hands to carry on this great work and to fulfill the tremendous responsibilities which come with the office of President" ("Looking Back and Moving Forward," 88).



President Thomas S. Monson with his counselors, Henry B. Eyring and Dieter F. Uchtdorf

## As President of the Church, He Continued to Minister to Individuals [16.38]

Earlier in his ministry, **President Thomas S. Monson** referred to a piece of artwork to encourage Church members to help rescue those who have strayed away from Church activity:

“I returned in my thoughts to a visit to one of the great art galleries of the world—even the famed Victoria and Albert Museum in London, England. There, exquisitely framed, was a masterpiece painted in 1831 by Joseph Mallord William Turner. The painting features heavy-laden black clouds and the fury of a turbulent sea portending danger and death. A light from a stranded vessel gleams far off. In the foreground, tossed high by incoming waves of foaming water, is a large lifeboat. The men pull mightily on the oars as the lifeboat plunges into the tempest. On the shore there stand a wife and two children, wet with rain and whipped by wind. They gaze anxiously seaward. In my mind I abbreviated the name of the painting. To me, it became *To the Rescue*.

“Amidst the storms of life, danger lurks; and men, like boats, find themselves stranded and facing destruction. Who will man the lifeboats, leaving behind the comforts of home and family, and go to the rescue? . . .

“When the Master ministered among men, He called fishermen at Galilee to leave their nets and follow Him, declaring, ‘I will make you fishers of men.’ [Matthew 4:19.] And so He did. Tonight He issues a call to each of us to ‘come join the ranks.’ [‘We Are All Enlisted,’ *Hymns*, no. 250.]” (“To the Rescue,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 48).

Some people may have expected that as President of the Church, Thomas S. Monson would no longer have time to reach out to individuals, as he had earlier in his ministry. However, **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that President Monson continued his efforts to minister to individuals: “His concerns are with the individual. I have seen enough Presidents of the Church to see differences. Some are very conscious of policy and procedures and so on; President Monson, of all the leaders that I have observed, is concerned for the individual. It comes out in his talks; it comes out in his meetings” (Heidi S. Swinton, *To the Rescue: The Biography of Thomas S. Monson* [2010], 501).

**Elder Marlin K. Jensen** of the Seventy noted that as Church President, Thomas S. Monson “still speaks at a funeral or two a week, and still makes his visits to the individual person. He is trying through that and through his teachings to get us to be galvanized into becoming real Christians at the very personal level, one person at a time, one soul at a time” (*To the Rescue*, 507).

**Elder Bruce D. Porter** of the Seventy further explained the rare gift President Monson possessed of caring for individuals: “Some people, if they are really prominent, . . . he will treat very kindly but he probably won’t visit their homes. But if you are the lowly of the earth, he is likely to drop in any time. . . .

“At our monthly General Authority testimony meetings, . . . President Monson shares many personal experiences with us. . . . The more I’ve listened, the more I have thought, ‘He is teaching us how to be Christlike. He is not teaching how to be great administrators, though he is that, but how to be Christlike’” (*To the Rescue*, 502–3).



Speaking in general conference

## He Encouraged Saints to Have an “Attitude of Gratitude” [16.39]

**President Thomas S. Monson** quoted the account of the feeding of the 4,000 found in the book of Matthew and then taught about the divine principle of gratitude:

“Notice that the Savior gave thanks for what they had—and a miracle followed: ‘And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full.’ [Matthew 15:37.]

“We have all experienced times when our focus is on what we lack rather than on our blessings. Said the Greek philosopher Epictetus, ‘He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has.’ [*The Discourses of Epictetus; with the Encheiridion and Fragments*, trans. George Long (1888), 429.]

“Gratitude is a divine principle. . . .

“We can lift ourselves and others as well when we refuse to remain in the realm of negative thought and cultivate within our hearts an attitude of gratitude. If ingratitude be numbered among the serious sins, then gratitude takes its place among the noblest of virtues. Someone has said that ‘gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others.’ [Cicero, in *A New Dictionary of Quotations on Historical Principles*, sel. H. L. Mencken (1942), 491.] . . .

“My brothers and sisters, to express gratitude is gracious and honorable, to enact gratitude is generous and noble, but to live with gratitude ever in our hearts is to touch heaven” (“The Divine Gift of Gratitude,” *Ensign* and *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 88, 90).

## He Was a Man of Optimism [16.40]

During a period of time when economic uncertainty was spreading across the globe, **President Thomas S. Monson** shared his optimistic attitude for the future:

“I testify to you that our promised blessings are beyond measure. Though the storm clouds may gather, though the rains may pour down upon us, our knowledge of the gospel and our love of our Heavenly Father and of our Savior will comfort and sustain us and bring joy to our hearts as we walk uprightly and keep the commandments. There will be nothing in this world that can defeat us.

“My beloved brothers and sisters, fear not. Be of good cheer. The future is as bright as your faith” (“Be of Good Cheer,” *Ensign* and *Liahona*, May 2009, 92).

## He Raised a Warning Voice about Pornography [16.41]

**President Thomas S. Monson** warned against the growing plague of pornography:

“Extremely alarming—are the reports of the number of individuals who are utilizing the Internet for evil and degrading purposes, the viewing of pornography being the most prevalent of these purposes. My brothers and sisters, involvement in such will literally destroy the spirit. Be strong. Be clean. Avoid such degrading and destructive types of content at all costs—wherever they may be! I sound this warning to everyone, everywhere. I add—particularly to the young people—that this includes pornographic images transmitted via cell phones.

“My beloved friends, under no circumstances allow yourselves to become trapped in the viewing of pornography, one of the most effective of Satan’s enticements. And if you have allowed yourself to become involved in this behavior, cease now. Seek the help you need to overcome and to change the direction of your life. Take the steps necessary to get back on the strait and narrow, and then stay there” (“Until We Meet Again,” *Ensign* and *Liahona*, May 2009, 113).

## He Counseled Us to Serve Missions [16.42]

**President Thomas S. Monson** reissued the call of previous prophets that every worthy, able young man should serve a mission: “To young men of the Aaronic Priesthood and to you young men who are becoming elders: I repeat what prophets have long taught—that every worthy, able young man should prepare to serve

a mission. Missionary service is a priesthood duty—an obligation the Lord expects of us who have been given so very much. Young men, I admonish you to prepare for service as a missionary. Keep yourselves clean and pure and worthy to represent the Lord. Maintain your health and strength. Study the scriptures. Where such is available, participate in seminary or institute. Familiarize yourself with the missionary handbook *Preach My Gospel* ("As We Meet Together Again," *Ensign* and *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 5–6).

During the administration of President Thomas S. Monson, the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles approved changes that made it easier for senior couples to serve missions. Beginning September 1, 2011, couples could serve for 6, 12, 18, or 23 months. In addition, a cap of \$1,400 (U.S.) per month was established for housing costs. The cap on housing costs was intended to allow more couples to serve and to allow Church leaders to make assignments without being constrained by whether couples can afford housing costs.

### God's Laws Remain Constant [16.43]

**President Thomas S. Monson** taught that we can draw strength from the consistent nature of our Father in Heaven and His eternal laws:

"Although the world has changed, the laws of God remain constant. They have not changed; they will not change. The Ten Commandments are just that—commandments. They are not suggestions. They are every bit as requisite today as they were when God gave them to the children of Israel. If we but listen, we hear the echo of God's voice, speaking to us here and now. . . .

"Our code of conduct is definitive; it is not negotiable. It is found not only in the Ten Commandments but also in the Sermon on the Mount, given to us by the Savior when He walked upon the earth. It is found throughout His teachings. It is found in the words of modern revelation.

"Our Father in Heaven is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The prophet Mormon tells us that God is 'unchangeable from all eternity to all eternity.' [Moroni 8:18.] In this world where nearly everything seems to be changing, His constancy is something on which we can



President and Sister Monson at April 2008 general conference

rely, an anchor to which we can hold fast and be safe, lest we be swept away into uncharted waters. . . .

"We must be vigilant in a world which has moved so far from that which is spiritual. It is essential that we reject anything that does not conform to our standards, refusing in the process to surrender that which we desire most: eternal life in the kingdom of God. The storms will still beat at our doors from time to time, for they are an inescapable part of our existence in mortality. We, however, will be far better equipped to deal with them, to learn from them, and to overcome them if we have the gospel at our core and the love of the Savior in our hearts" ("Stand in Holy Places," *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 83–84).

## “I Know That My Redeemer Lives” [16.44]

At the conclusion of a talk on the life and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, **President Thomas S. Monson** testified:

“My brothers and sisters, we laugh, we cry, we work, we play, we love, we live. And then we die. Death is our universal heritage. All must pass its portals. Death claims the aged, the weary and worn. It visits the youth in the bloom of hope and the glory of expectation. Nor are little children kept beyond its grasp. In the words of the Apostle Paul, ‘It is appointed unto men once to die.’ [Hebrews 9:27.]

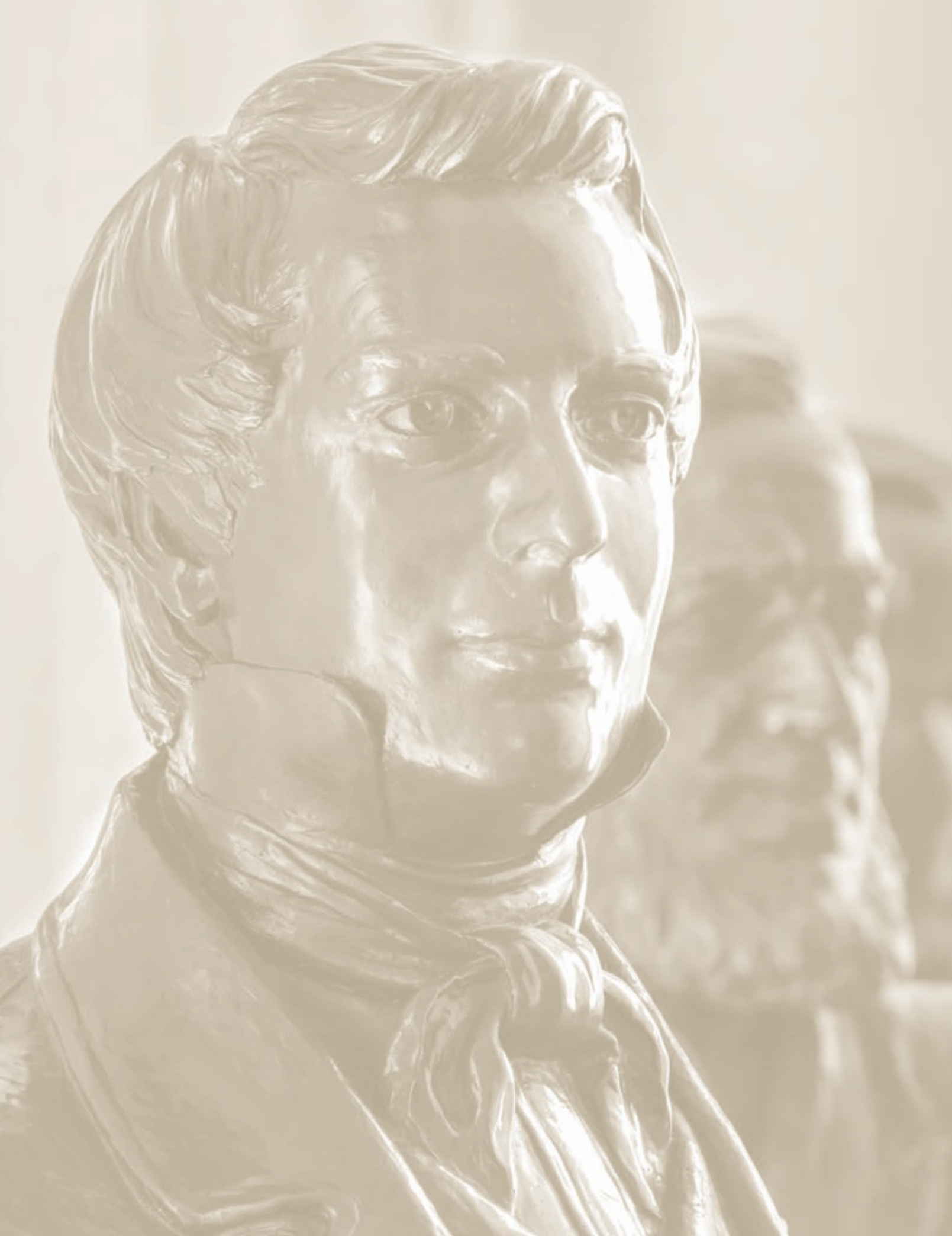
“And dead we would remain but for one Man and His mission, even Jesus of Nazareth. Born in a stable, cradled in a manger, His birth fulfilled the inspired pronouncements of many prophets. He was taught from on high. He provided the life, the light, and the way. Multitudes followed Him. Children adored Him. The haughty rejected Him. He spoke in parables. He taught by example. He lived a perfect life. . . .

“With all my heart and the fervency of my soul, 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!”’ [“I Know That My Redeemer Lives,” *Hymns*, no 136; see also Job 19:25]” (“I Know That My Redeemer Lives,” *Ensign* and *Liahona*, May 2007, 24–25).



President Thomas S. Monson





# Presidents of the Church

## Timeline

	Church History	World History
1800		<b>Estimated world population: 813 million</b>
	Hyrum Smith born (Feb. 9)	The Second “Great Awakening” (U.S. religious revival) (1800–1830) Eli Whitney (U.S.) made muskets with interchangeable parts William Herschel (Brit.) discovered infrared solar rays
1801	Brigham Young born (June 1)	
1803	Joseph Smith Sr. moved his family to Sharon, Vermont	Robert Fulton (U.S.) invented the steamboat Napoleonic Wars began; they lasted 12 years Richard Trevithick (Brit.) built first steam locomotive Louisiana Purchase negotiated with France; size of U.S. doubled
1804		Napoleon Bonaparte crowned emperor in Paris, France
1805	David Whitmer born (Jan. 7) Joseph Smith born (Dec. 23)	Napoleon proclaimed himself King of Italy Lord Horatio Nelson defeated the French-Spanish fleets in the Battle of Trafalgar Earthquake in Naples, Italy, killed nearly 26,000 people
1806	Oliver Cowdery born (Oct. 3)	
1807	Wilford Woodruff born (Mar. 1)	British Parliament passed act outlawing slave trade
1808	John Taylor born (Nov. 1)	Ludwig van Beethoven (Ger.) debuted his 5th and 6th Symphonies
1810		Argentina, Colombia, and Chile declared their independence from Spain; Mexicans began fight for their independence from Spain Nicholas Francois Appert (Fr.) developed method for canning foods
1812		Napoleon began his invasion of Russia Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm (Ger.) published their fairy tales The War of 1812 began (1812–15) (U.S.–Britain)
1813	Joseph Smith had leg operation	
1814	Lorenzo Snow born (Apr. 3)	After various defeats, Napoleon was banished to the island of Elba
1815		Mount Tambora erupted in Indonesia, killing about 10,000; indirectly contributed to worldwide death toll over 80,000 and causing major climate changes Congress of Vienna (1814–15) generated political and geographical realignments of Europe Napoleon left Elba to recapture France; defeated at Waterloo
1816	Smith family moved to Palmyra, New York, due to three successive crop failures in Vermont	Argentina declared independence from Spain
1818		Chile gained independence from Spain Franz X. Gruber (Austria) composed the music for “Silent Night”
1819	Smith family moved to Manchester, New York	
1820	Joseph Smith had the First Vision (spring)	King George III of Great Britain died; his son George IV became king
1821		Napoleon died on the island of St. Helena
1822		Earthquake in Syria killed 20,000 people
1823	Angel Moroni visited Joseph Smith three times during one night and twice the next day (Sept. 21–22) Joseph Smith first visited the Hill Cumorah and viewed the gold plates Alvin Smith died (Nov. 19)	Monroe Doctrine, warning European countries about interference with countries in Western Hemisphere, announced Mexico became a republic three years after declaring independence from Spain

	Church History	World History
1824	Joseph Smith made second visit to Hill Cumorah to receive instruction	Simón Bolívar completed campaign for independence for Bolivia, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela
1825	Joseph Smith made third visit to Hill Cumorah for instruction	First steam locomotive railway in England began operating
1826	Joseph Smith made fourth visit to Hill Cumorah for instruction	
1827	Joseph Smith and Emma Hale married (Jan. 18) Joseph Smith obtained the gold plates (Sept. 22; see Isaiah 29:11–12)	John Walker (Eng.) introduced sulfur friction matches
1828	Martin Harris visited Charles Anthon in New York City (Feb.) Martin Harris lost 116 manuscript pages of the Book of Mormon (June) Joseph Smith regained the gift to translate the Book of Mormon (Sept.)	
1829	Aaronic Priesthood restored (May 15); Melchizedek Priesthood restored shortly thereafter; Joseph Smith ordained an Apostle by Peter, James, and John (see D&C 20:2; 27:12; 128:20) Book of Mormon translation completed; the Three Witnesses and the Eight Witnesses were shown the gold plates	First steam-powered locomotive in U.S.; first passenger rail line
1830	<b>Church membership: approximately 280 at end of year</b>  Book of Mormon published Joseph Smith sustained as First Elder of the Church (Apr. 6) The Church was organized (Apr. 6)	King George IV of Great Britain died; his brother William IV became king
1831	Church members began gathering to Ohio Some Church members moved to Missouri	Charles Darwin sailed on surveying expedition on HMS <i>Beagle</i> (to 1836)
1832	<b>Joseph Smith sustained as President of the High Priesthood (Jan. 25)</b>	
	Vision of the three degrees of glory (D&C 76) received (Feb. 16) “Prophecy on War” (D&C 87; Dec. 25) and “Olive Leaf” (D&C 88; Dec. 27–28, Jan. 3) received	
1833	The Word of Wisdom (D&C 89) received (Feb. 27) Book of Commandments published First Presidency organized (Mar. 18) Brigham Young baptized (Apr. 14) Wilford Woodruff baptized (Dec. 31)	
1834	First stake organized Zion’s Camp (May–July)	Louis Braille (Fr.) perfected his reading system for the blind Cyrus McCormick (U.S.) introduced mechanical grain harvester Slavery abolished in the British Empire
1835	Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and Quorum of the Seventy organized (Feb.) Mummies and scrolls purchased from Michael Chandler (July) Doctrine and Covenants approved (Aug. 17)	Halley’s Comet reappeared (76-year cycle) Hans Christian Andersen (Dan.) published first of his children’s stories
1836	Kirtland Temple dedicated (Mar. 27); first temple built in this dispensation Moses, Elias, and Elijah committed priesthood keys to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery (Apr. 3) John Taylor baptized (May 9) Lorenzo Snow baptized (June 19) Church hymnal published (Nov.)	
1837	First mission in the Church organized in Great Britain	After the death of her uncle, Victoria became Queen of Great Britain

	Church History	World History
1838	Joseph Smith received revelation on tithing (July 8) Governor Boggs issued "Extermination Order" in Missouri (Oct. 27) Haun's Mill massacre (Oct. 30) Joseph F. Smith born (Nov. 13) Joseph and Hyrum Smith imprisoned in Liberty Jail (Dec. 1838–Apr. 1839)	
1839	Church members moved to Illinois and Iowa	Public announcement of Louis Daguerre's (Fr.) form of photography Kirkpatrick Macmillan (Scot.) constructed first bicycle Charles Goodyear (U.S.) discovered process of "vulcanization," making commercial use of rubber possible
1840	<b>Church membership: 16,865</b>	
	First Church members to gather from a foreign land sailed from England Joseph Smith began teaching baptism for the dead (Aug. 15)	Upper and Lower Canada united
1841	Orson Hyde dedicated the Holy Land for the return of the Jews (Oct. 24)	China ceded Hong Kong to Great Britain
1842	Relief Society organized (Mar. 17) First full endowment given (May 4) Wentworth Letter written (spring) Book of Abraham published	Crawford W. Long (U.S.) used ether for surgical anesthesia Charles Dickens published <i>A Christmas Carol</i>
1843	Revelation on the new and everlasting covenant, marriage, and fulness of life (D&C 132; recorded on July 12)	
1844	<b>Joseph and Hyrum Smith martyred in Carthage, Illinois (June 27)</b>	
	The Twelve Apostles sustained as the presiding quorum in the Church (Aug. 8)	Samuel Morse (U.S.) sent first telegraph message Friedrich Gottlob Keller (Ger.) invented wood pulp paper
1845	Church leaders announced plans to move to the West (Oct.)	
1846	Saints began leaving Nauvoo (Feb.) Nauvoo Temple dedicated (May 1) Mormon Battalion began its 2,000-mile march from Kanesville, Iowa (July 21)	U.S. declared war on Mexico Elias Howe (U.S.) patented first lockstitch sewing machine Potato crop failure led to famine in Ireland
1847	Members of Mormon Battalion discharged at Los Angeles, California (July 16) Brigham Young's Pioneer Company arrived in the Salt Lake Valley (July 22–24)	
	<b>Brigham Young became second President of the Church, with Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards as counselors (Dec. 27)</b>	
1848	Miracle of seagulls saved crops in Utah	<i>Communist Manifesto</i> issued by Marx and Engels
1849	Perpetual Emigrating Fund established (Oct.) Sunday School organized (Dec. 9)	Armand Fizeau (Fr.) determined speed of light
1850	<b>Church membership: 51,839</b>	<b>Estimated world population: 1.13 billion</b>
	Utah became a U.S. territory; Brigham Young appointed its first governor (Sept.)	R. W. Bunsen (Ger.) produced a gas burner
1851	Pearl of Great Price published in Liverpool, England	Isaac Singer (U.S.) patented first continuous stitch sewing machine Telegraph began operating between London and Paris
1852	Doctrine of plural marriage first publicly announced (Aug. 28–29)	
1853	Four cornerstones of the Salt Lake Temple laid (Apr. 6)	Commodore Matthew Perry (U.S.) sailed to Japan (isolated for 150 years) to negotiate trade agreements Crimean War began between Turkey and Russia (ended 1856)

	Church History	World History
1854		During the Crimean War, Florence Nightingale (Eng.) redefined the field of nursing
1855	Fast day held the first Thursday of each month	
1856	Pioneer handcart companies began (June); Willie and Martin companies rescued (Oct.–Nov.) Heber J. Grant born (Nov. 22)	
1857	Utah War (to 1858)	Indian armies mutinied against Britain
1858	Johnston's Army passed through Salt Lake City (June 26)	First transatlantic telegraph cable between the U.S. and Britain completed
1859		Work began on Suez Canal Charles Darwin published <i>On the Origin of Species by Natural Selection</i>
<b>1860</b>	<b>Church membership: 61,082</b>	
	Handcart era ended (last company arrived in Salt Lake in Aug.)	Majority of Italy united under Garibaldi Jean Etienne Lenoir (Fr.) demonstrated first practical internal combustion engine
1861	Church began use of wagon trains that left Salt Lake Valley in the spring with provisions for yearly immigration and returned in the fall with immigrants; used until 1868 (railroad came in 1869)	Abraham Lincoln became U.S. President (1861–65) U.S. Civil War began (ended 1865)
1862	U.S. Congress passed Morrill Act, outlawing plural marriage in U.S. territories (July 8)	All foreigners expelled from Japan Victor Hugo (Fr.) published <i>Les Misérables</i>
1863	Brigham Young arrested on charge of bigamy (Mar. 10); never brought to trial	Founding of the International Committee of the Red Cross
1864		Louis Pasteur (Fr.) developed pasteurization
1865		Gustave Doré (Fr.) created his illustrations for the Bible
1866	Settlers in many parts of Utah battled with Indians	Alfred Nobel (Swed.) invented dynamite Fyodor Dostoyevsky (Russ.) published <i>Crime and Punishment</i>
1867	First general conference held in the Salt Lake Tabernacle (Oct. 6)	U.S. purchased Alaska from Russia Britain granted four Canadian provinces dominion status
1868	Last organized "Church train" arrived in Salt Lake Valley	Johannes Brahms (Ger.) composed <i>Ein Deutsches Requiem</i>
1869	Church-owned Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Institution (ZCMI) opened for business (spring) President Brigham Young organized the Young Ladies' Retrenchment Association (Nov. 28; later renamed the Young Women's Mutual Improvement Organization)	U.S. first transcontinental railroad completed at Promontory, Utah Suez Canal, connecting the Mediterranean and Red Seas, opened
<b>1870</b>	<b>Church membership: 90,130</b>	
	Utah became one of first U.S. states or territories to grant women the right to vote (Feb. 12) George Albert Smith born (Apr. 4)	Franco-Prussian War (ended 1871)
1871	Location for the St. George Temple dedicated (Nov.)	
1872		Jules Verne (Fr.) published <i>Around the World in 80 Days</i>
1873	President Young called six additional counselors in the First Presidency David O. McKay born (Sept. 8)	Color photography developed
1874	United order movement launched (Feb.); over 200 united orders established in Latter-day Saint settlements by the end of the year	

	Church History	World History
1875	First Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association organized (June 10) Salt Lake Tabernacle dedicated (Oct.); President John Taylor, President of the Quorum of the Twelve, read the dedicatory prayer Brigham Young Academy founded in Provo, Utah (Oct. 16); became Brigham Young University in 1903	Count Leo Tolstoy (Russ.) published <i>Anna Karenina</i>
1876	Joseph Fielding Smith born (July 19)	Alexander Graham Bell (U.S.) patented the telephone Korea became an independent nation
1877	St. George Temple dedicated (Apr. 6); first temple since the Church moved west	Thomas Edison (U.S.) invented the phonograph
	<b>President Brigham Young died (Aug. 29)</b>	
1878	Primary founded; first meeting at Farmington, Utah (Aug. 25)	
1879		Thomas Edison (U.S.) developed electric incandescent light bulb Zulu war in South Africa
1880	<b>Church membership: 133,628</b>	
	Jubilee year celebration inaugurated (Apr. 6), reminiscent of Old Testament practice (see Leviticus 25) Pearl of Great Price accepted as a standard work of the Church (Oct. 10)	
	<b>John Taylor became third President of the Church, with George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith as counselors (Oct. 10)</b>	
1881		Clara Barton organized American Red Cross
1882	Assembly Hall on Temple Square dedicated (Jan. 8)	Robert Louis Stevenson (Scot.) published <i>Treasure Island</i>
1883	First permanent branch of the Church among the Maoris organized in New Zealand (Aug. 26)	Eruption of Krakatoa, volcano in Indonesia, killed almost 36,000 on nearby islands
1884	Hundreds of Church members imprisoned for the practice of polygamy Logan Temple dedicated (May 17); second temple since the Church moved west	World's first steel-framed "skyscraper" (10 stories high) completed in Chicago, Illinois, U.S.
1885	Extensive prosecution of Church members practicing polygamy continued under the Edmunds Law; President John Taylor and other Church leaders went into hiding Church colonies in Mexico established	Karl Benz (Ger.) built first practical automobile powered by internal combustion engine
1887	<b>President John Taylor died while in "exile" (July 25)</b>	
	Church disincorporated and property confiscated due to prosecution under the Edmunds-Tucker Act Church settlements in Canada began	
1888	Missionary work began in Samoa Manti Temple dedicated (May 17, 21); third temple since the Church moved west	George Eastman (U.S.) introduced the Kodak box camera Nikola Tesla (U.S.) built first alternating current (AC) electric motor
1889	<b>Wilford Woodruff became fourth President of the Church, with George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith as counselors (Apr. 7)</b>	
		Eiffel Tower opened during Paris World Exhibition
1890	<b>Church membership: 188,263</b>	
	"Manifesto" issued (Sept. 24); unanimously accepted by vote in general conference (Oct. 6; see Official Declaration 1) First Presidency sent letter directing that a weekday religious education program be established in every ward where there was no Church school (Oct. 25)	

	Church History	World History
1891		Earthquake in Japan killed nearly 10,000 people
1892	Brigham Young Academy building dedicated in Provo, Utah (Jan. 4) Church celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Relief Society	Pyotr Tchaikovsky's (Russ.) <i>The Nutcracker</i> ballet performed for the first time
1893	Proclamation of amnesty for polygamists issued by U.S. President Benjamin Harrison (Jan. 4) Salt Lake Temple dedicated (Apr. 6); fourth temple since the Church moved west	U.S. stock market crash resulted in four-year economic depression New Zealand first country to grant women the vote
1894	Genealogical Society of Utah organized (Nov. 13)	Rudyard Kipling (Eng.) published <i>The Jungle Book</i>
1895	Spencer W. Kimball born (Mar. 28) First stake outside the U.S. created in Cardston, Alberta, Canada (June 9)	X-rays discovered by German physicist Wilhelm C. Roentgen Guglielmo Marconi (Ital.) invented radio telegraphy
1896	Utah became a state (Jan. 4) Fast day changed from Thursday to Sunday (Nov. 5)	First modern Olympic games held in Athens, Greece
1897	Fiftieth anniversary of the Saints' arrival in the Salt Lake Valley celebrated (July 24) <i>Improvement Era</i> began publication (Nov.)	Jewish Zionist Congress convened in Switzerland
1898	First single, official, proselyting female missionaries set apart (spring)	Spain and U.S. declared war on each other over Cuba (Apr.–Dec.) Pierre and Marie Curie (Fr.) discovered radium
	<b>President Wilford Woodruff died (Sept. 2)</b> <b>Lorenzo Snow became fifth President of the Church, with George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith as counselors (Sept. 13)</b>	
1899	Harold B. Lee born (Mar. 28) Revelation emphasizing tithing received by President Snow (May 17) Ezra Taft Benson born (Aug. 4)	Boer War between British and Boers (Dutch settlers in South Africa; ended 1902) Bayer company (Ger.) patented aspirin First magnetic recording of sound
1900	<b>Church membership: 283,765</b>	<b>Estimated world population: 1.64 billion</b>
	President Snow reaffirmed Church's ban on plural marriage (Jan. 8)	Boxer Rebellion against foreigners in China began (ended 1901)
1901	Mission opened in Japan (Aug. 12)	Queen Victoria of England died; succeeded by her son Edward VII
	<b>President Lorenzo Snow died (Oct. 10)</b> <b>Joseph F. Smith became sixth President of the Church, with John R. Winder and Anthon H. Lund as counselors (Oct. 17)</b>	
	<i>Children's Friend</i> first published (Jan.)	
1902		Mount Pelée erupted in the Caribbean, killing nearly 29,000 people Aswan Dam in Egypt opened
1903	Brigham Young Academy became Brigham Young University (Oct.) Church purchased Carthage Jail (Nov. 5)	Henry Ford founded the Ford Motor Company in Detroit, Michigan, U.S. Wright brothers flew a manned, motorized airplane at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, U.S. First Tour de France bicycle race held
1904	President Smith issued second manifesto (Apr. 6)	Russo-Japanese war Trans-Siberian railroad completed (4,607 miles)
1905	Dr. William H. Groves Latter-day Saints Hospital, first in Church hospital system, opened in Salt Lake City (Jan. 1); Church turned its hospitals over to private organization in 1975 Joseph Smith Memorial Cottage and Monument, in Sharon, Vermont, site of the Prophet's birth, dedicated (Dec. 23)	

	Church History	World History
1906	President Joseph F. Smith became the first Church President to visit Europe (summer)	San Francisco (U.S.) earthquake killed 700 people; \$400 million in property loss Mohandas "Mahatma" Ghandi began nonviolent resistance movement in South Africa A typhoon in Tahiti killed over 10,000 people
1907	President Smith announced that the Church was free of debt (Jan. 10) Church purchased Smith farm near Palmyra, New York, including the Sacred Grove Howard W. Hunter born (Nov. 14)	Sir Robert Baden-Powell (Eng.) founded Boy Scouts
1908	Priesthood programs and other organizations systematized (Apr. 8)	Henry Ford (U.S.) introduced Model T automobile
1909	Responding to debate of Darwinism and evolution, First Presidency issued official statement on origin of man (Nov.)	North Pole reached by Robert E. Peary and Matthew Henson from U.S. Sigmund Freud (Aust.) introduced his theories on psychoanalysis
1910	<b>Church membership: 398,478</b>	<b>Estimated world population: 1.75 billion</b>
	Gordon B. Hinckley born (June 23)	King Edward VII of England died; succeeded by George V
1911	Church adopted Boy Scout program	Roald Amundsen (Nor.) became first person to reach South Pole
1912	First seminary organized at Granite High School in Salt Lake City (Sept.) Correlation Committee created (Nov. 8)	SS <i>Titanic</i> sank after hitting iceberg; 1,513 passengers and crew died
1913	Boy Scout program officially adopted as activity program for boys of the Church (May 21) Seagull Monument on Temple Square dedicated (Oct. 1)	
1914		Panama Canal officially opened Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary assassinated, triggering World War I
1915	<i>Relief Society Magazine</i> began monthly publication (Jan.) First Presidency inaugurated "Home Evening" program (Apr. 27) Ricks Academy, in Rexburg, Idaho, became Ricks College (fall) Elder James E. Talmage's book <i>Jesus the Christ</i> published (Sept.)	Albert Einstein published his general theory of relativity
1916	First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve issued doctrinal exposition on the Father and the Son (June 30)	Battle of Verdun results in over 1 million soldiers being killed
1917	Church Administration Building completed in Salt Lake City (Oct. 2)	Balfour Declaration declared Palestine as homeland for the Jews
1918	President Smith received vision of the redemption of the dead (Oct. 3; see D&C 138)	Czar Nicholas II and his family executed; Russian revolution (to 1921) Influenza epidemic (killed 20 million people by 1920)
	<b>President Joseph F. Smith died (Nov. 19)</b> <b>Heber J. Grant became seventh President of the Church, with Anthon H. Lund and Charles W. Penrose as counselors (Nov. 23)</b>	
1919	April general conference postponed to June 1–3 due to nationwide influenza epidemic Laie Hawaii Temple, first out of contiguous U.S., dedicated (Nov. 27)	Treaty of Versailles officially ended World War I
1920	<b>Church membership: 525,987</b>	
	Elders David O. McKay and Hugh J. Cannon left on 55,896-mile world survey of Church missions (Dec. 4; returned Dec. 24, 1921)	Earthquake in China killed over 180,000 people The League of Nations was established
1921		
1922	Primary Children's Hospital opened in Salt Lake City (May) President Heber J. Grant dedicated Deseret News radio station and, for the first time in the Church's history, delivered a message over the airways (May 6)	Benito Mussolini established fascist dictatorship in Italy King Tutankhamen's tomb was opened in Egypt

	Church History	World History
1923	Church purchased part of the Hill Cumorah Cardston Alberta Temple dedicated in Canada (Aug. 26)	
1924	First radio broadcast of general conference (Oct. 3)	First winter Olympic games Vladimir Lenin died; Joseph Stalin began rule of USSR
1925	Mission home in Salt Lake City; first organized training for missionaries First mission in South America established (Dec. 6)	Adolf Hitler published <i>Mein Kampf</i>
1926	First institute of religion began in Moscow, Idaho, at University of Idaho (fall)	Richard Byrd and Floyd Bennett (U.S.) made first airplane flight over North Pole
1927	Thomas S. Monson born (Aug. 21) Mesa Arizona Temple dedicated (Oct. 23); dedicatory services broadcast by radio	Economic system in Germany collapsed Charles Lindbergh completed 33.5-hour solo transatlantic flight from New York to Paris
1928	Church purchased the rest of the Hill Cumorah 100th stake organized, in Lehi, Utah (July 1)	Chiang Kai-shek overthrew Manchu dynasty; elected president of China Josef Stalin began his Five-Year Plan in the Soviet Union Alexander Fleming (Brit.) discovered penicillin
1929	Tabernacle Choir began weekly network radio broadcasts (July 15)	New York stock market crashed, beginning severe economic depression (to 1941)
1930	<b>Church membership: 670,017</b>	<b>Estimated world population: 2.07 billion</b>
	Church observed the centennial of its organization (Apr. 6)	Max Theiler (S. Afr.) developed yellow fever vaccine
1931	<i>Church News</i> first published by Church's <i>Deseret News</i> (Apr. 6)	
1932	Church began a campaign against the use of tobacco (Apr. 2) Special fast day called during the Great Depression to help the poor (May 15)	Scientists split the atom Mohandas "Mahatma" Ghandi began a "fast unto death" and urged a boycott of British goods to protest British government's treatment of India's lowest caste, the "untouchables"; helped bring reforms Philo Farnsworth (U.S.) developed electronic television Amelia Earhart (U.S.) became first woman to make solo airplane flight across Atlantic
1933	Church held a six-day commemoration of the 100-year anniversary of the Word of Wisdom revelation (Feb. 21–26)	Germany and Japan withdrew from League of Nations First concentration camps erected by the Nazis in Germany; by 1945, 8–10 million prisoners were interned, at least half of them (most of them Jews) were killed
1934	Junior Sunday School became official part of Sunday School organization	Hitler gained titled of Führer and control of Germany
1935	Hill Cumorah Monument dedicated (July 21)	Robert Watson-Watt (Scot.) built radar equipment to detect aircraft
1936	Church introduced its formal welfare program, the Church Security Program (Apr.); later renamed the Church Welfare Program (1938)	Spanish Civil War began (ended 1939) King George V of England died and was succeeded by his son Edward VIII; Edward VIII later abdicated and was succeeded by his brother George VI
1937	Church purchased portion of Nauvoo Temple lot (Feb. 20) Church members counseled to store a year's supply of food (Apr.) Hill Cumorah pageant, "America's Witness for Christ," began (July)	U.S. gunboat <i>Panay</i> sunk by Japanese; Japan invaded China Plastics first used in manufacturing Frank Whittle (Brit.) built first jet engine German dirigible <i>Hindenburg</i> exploded and burned while landing in New Jersey
1938	First Deseret Industries store opened, in Salt Lake City (Aug. 14) Genealogical Society of Utah began microfilming records (Nov.)	Lajos Biro (Hung.) invented ballpoint pen
1939	Church purchased Liberty Jail in Missouri (June 19) First Presidency recalled all missionaries from Europe (Aug.–Nov.)	Germany invaded Poland; World War II began (ended 1945)

	Church History	World History
1940	<b>Church membership: 862,664</b> First Presidency recalled all missionaries from South Pacific and South Africa	<b>Estimated world population: 2.3 billion</b> Winston Churchill became Britain prime minister German blitz on London began; nearly one-third of the city destroyed by end of year
1941	First Presidency announced new positions of Assistants to the Twelve (Apr. 6)	Germany attacked U.S. ships; Japan attacked Pearl Harbor; U.S. entered World War II
1942	Church members urged to restrict travel to comply with wartime restrictions	C. S. Lewis (Eng.) published <i>The Screwtape Letters</i>
1943		Famine in India killed at least 1.5 million people Selman Waksman (U.S.) discovered streptomycin
1944	Church announced purchase of Spring Hill in Missouri, (Adam-ondi-Ahman; Mar.) Memorial Services held to commemorate 100th anniversary of the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum (June)	Allies launched "D-Day" invasion of Europe
1945	<b>President Heber J. Grant died (May 14)</b> <b>George Albert Smith became eighth President of the Church, with J. Reuben Clark Jr. and David O. McKay as counselors (May 21)</b>	
	For the first time since 1942, general Church membership invited to attend general conference (Oct. 5–7)	U.S. dropped two atomic bombs on Japan World War II ended
1946	Church began sending supplies to war-torn Europe (Jan.)	United Nations held first session Cold War began (ended 1990); British Prime Minister Winston Churchill coined term "Iron Curtain"
1947	Church membership passed one million Church celebrated 100th anniversary of pioneers' arrival in Salt Lake Valley (July 24)	Dead Sea Scrolls discovered To prove prehistoric immigration, Thor Heyerdahl (Nor.) took raft expedition from Peru to Polynesia
1948	The Tabernacle Choir performed its 1,000th nationally broadcast radio program (Oct. 17)	Gandhi assassinated in India Israel declared an independent state World Council of Churches organized
1949	The Welfare Program declared a program of the Church (Apr. 5) Public telecast of general conference began (Oct.)	China adopted communism as form of government NATO established German Democratic Republic and Federal Republic of Germany created, splitting Germany into East and West Germany Independent Republic of Ireland established
1950	<b>Church membership: 1,111,314</b> President George Albert Smith dedicated statue of Brigham Young at U.S. Capitol (June 1) First early-morning seminary started in Southern California (Sept.)	<b>World population: 2.55 billion</b> Korean War began (ended 1953)
1951	<b>President George Albert Smith died (Apr. 4)</b> <b>David O. McKay became ninth President of the Church, with Stephen L. Richards and J. Reuben Clark Jr. as counselors (Apr. 9)</b>	
1951		Color television first introduced First thermo-nuclear bomb detonated, in the Marshall Islands Electricity produced using nuclear fuel
1952	Missionaries began using the Systematic Program for Teaching the Gospel, inaugurating use of a standard plan for missionary work throughout the Church Elder Ezra Taft Benson chosen as Secretary of Agriculture by newly elected U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower (Dec. 31); Elder Benson served for eight years	<i>The Diary of Anne Frank</i> published King George VI of England died; succeeded by his daughter Elizabeth II First hydrogen bomb detonated

	Church History	World History
1953	Church organized its United Church School System (July 9)	Sir Edmund Hillary (N.Z.) and Tenzing Norgay (Nepal) first to reach peak of Mt. Everest, world's tallest mountain Jonas Salk (U.S.) developed anti-polio vaccine
1954	Church announced inauguration of Indian Placement Program (July)	First atomic submarine, <i>Nautilus</i> (U.S.), launched
1955	Bern Switzerland Temple (first in Europe) dedicated (Sept. 11) Tabernacle Choir made major concert tour of Europe (Aug.–Sept.) Church College of Hawaii (now BYU–Hawaii) opened (Sept. 26)	Warsaw Pact signed In South Africa, armed police move 60,000 blacks from an area to be used by whites only
1956	Relief Society Building in Salt Lake City dedicated (Oct. 3)	Nikita Khrushchev denounced Joseph Stalin (USSR) Transatlantic cable telephone service began
1957	Semiannual general conference cancelled because of flu epidemic (Oct.)	Soviet Union launched <i>Sputnik I</i> , first artificial satellite
1958	Hamilton New Zealand and London England Temples dedicated (Apr. 20; Sept. 7)	U.S. and Canada established North American Air Defense Command (NORAD) Nikita Khrushchev became leader of USSR
1959	President McKay issued statement “Every member a missionary” (Apr. 6) Tabernacle Choir awarded a Grammy, a national music award, for its recording of “Battle Hymn of the Republic” (Nov. 29)	Fidel Castro took control of Cuban government Vietnam War started (ended 1973)
1960	<b>Church membership: 1,693,180</b>	<b>World population: 3.04 billion</b>
	First stake in England organized in Manchester (Mar. 27)	American U-2 spy plane shot down over Russia
1961	First non-English speaking stake created in The Hague in the Netherlands (Mar. 12) Language Training Institute for missionaries called to foreign countries established at BYU (Nov.); later became Language Training Mission (1963)	Bay of Pigs Invasion failed in Cuba Yuri Gagarin (USSR) became the first man in space; he orbited the earth East Germany erected Berlin Wall OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) officially organized
1962	Age of young men eligible for full-time missions lowered from 20 to 19 (Mar.) Church purchased shortwave radio station (Oct. 10); subsequently used to transmit Church broadcasts to Europe and South America	John Glenn became the first American to orbit the earth Cuban missile crisis—USSR threatened to build missile bases in Cuba Telstar (U.S.), first communications satellite, launched
1963	Polynesian Cultural Center dedicated in Hawaii (Oct. 12)	Michael E. DeBakey implanted first artificial heart (U.S.) Leonid Brezhnev became leader of USSR Valentina Tereshkova (USSR) became the first woman in space U.S. President John F. Kennedy was assassinated
1964	Home teaching program inaugurated (Jan.) Church hosted pavilion at the New York World's Fair (Apr.)	
1965	Church first published a family home evening manual (Jan.) Missionary work resumed in Italy (Feb.), after being stopped in 1862	U.S. entered Vietnam War
1966	First stake in South America organized in São Paulo, Brazil (May 1) Granite Mountain Records Vault dedicated (June 22)	
1967	First regional representatives called (Sept. 29) Some of the Egyptian papyri Joseph Smith owned were given to the Church by New York Metropolitan Museum of Art (Nov.)	Six-day Israeli-Arab War First human heart transplant performed in South Africa
1968	Relief Society general president Belle S. Spafford named president of U.S. National Council of Woman (Oct. 17); she served two years	Martin Luther King Jr. (U.S.) was assassinated

	Church History	World History
1969		Neil Armstrong (U.S.) became the first man to walk on the moon First World Conference on Records was held (in Salt Lake City) About 100 countries signed nuclear nonproliferation treaty
1970	<b>Church membership: 2,930,810</b>	<b>World population: 3.71 billion</b>
	<b>President David O. McKay died (Jan. 18)</b> <b>Joseph Fielding Smith became 10th President of the Church, with Harold B. Lee and N. Eldon Tanner as counselors (Jan. 23)</b>	
	Monday designated for family home evening Churchwide (Oct.)	Tonga and Fiji gained independence from Britain Aswan High Dam in Egypt completed Cyclones and floods in East Pakistan killed 500,000 people Earthquakes, floods, and landslides killed 30,000 people in Peru
1971	Publication of new Church magazines began: <i>Ensign</i> , <i>New Era</i> , and <i>Friend</i> (Jan.) Medical missionary program began (July) First area conference held in Manchester, England (Aug. 27–29)	
1972	<b>President Joseph Fielding Smith died (July 2)</b> <b>Harold B. Lee became 11th President of the Church, with N. Eldon Tanner and Marion G. Romney as counselors (July 7)</b>	
		Earthquake in Nicaragua killed over 10,000 people
1973	Creation of Welfare Services Department announced (Apr. 7)	Vietnam War ended, U.S. troops pulled out Oil-producing Arab nations ban export of oil to U.S., western Europe, and Japan (to 1974) because of their support of Israel, resulting in energy crisis
	<b>President Harold B. Lee died (Dec. 26)</b> <b>Spencer W. Kimball became 12th President of the Church, with N. Eldon Tanner and Marion G. Romney as counselors (Dec. 30)</b>	
1974	Washington D.C. Temple dedicated (Nov. 19)	Author Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn expelled from Soviet Union after publishing <i>The Gulag Archipelago</i>
1975	The 28-story Church Office Building was dedicated in Salt Lake City (July 24; Church departments had begun moving in Nov. 1972)	Civil war in Lebanon Pol Pot took over Cambodia Communists took over government of South Vietnam
1976	Teton Dam in Idaho burst, affecting thousands of Latter-day Saints (June 5) Two revelations accepted for addition to Pearl of Great Price (Apr. 3); later moved to Doctrine and Covenants (June 6, 1979; see D&C 137; 138) Language Training Center constructed in Provo, Utah; later became Missionary Training Center and used to train all missionaries (Oct. 26, 1978) Organization of First Quorum of the Seventy announced (Oct. 1)	Earthquakes in Italy, China, Philippines, Turkey, Bali, and Guatemala killed an estimated 780,000 people <i>U.S. Viking I and II</i> space probes landed on Mars
1977	New format for general conferences announced (Jan. 1): first Sunday in each April and October and preceding Saturday	First space shuttle flight (U.S.) U.S. confirmed testing of neutron bomb
1978	Revelation announced allowing worthy men of all races to receive priesthood (June; see Official Declaration 2) São Paulo Brazil Temple, first in South America, dedicated (Oct. 30)	
1979	1,000th stake organized at Nauvoo, Illinois (Feb. 18) LDS edition of King James Bible published (Sept. 29) Orson Hyde Memorial Gardens on Mount of Olives in Jerusalem dedicated (Oct. 24)	The Shah left Iran, and Ayatollah Khomeini took over Soviet invasion of Afghanistan stirred world protests Partial meltdown at Three-Mile Island (U.S.) nuclear plant released radioactivity into the air Mother Teresa awarded the Nobel Peace Prize Margaret Thatcher became first woman prime minister of Britain

	Church History	World History
1980	<b>Church membership: 4,639,822</b> Consolidated, three-hour Sunday meeting schedule began in U.S. and Canada (Mar. 2) Church celebrated 150th anniversary (Apr. 6)	<b>World population: 4.45 billion</b> Eight-year Iran-Iraq war began <i>Voyager 1</i> photos revealed other moons around Saturn Soviet cosmonauts returned to earth after 185 days on a space station
1981	Threefold mission of the Church proclaimed (Apr. 4) Elder Gordon B. Hinckley called as third counselor in First Presidency (July 23) New version of triple combination published (Sept.)	Ronald W. Reagan became U.S. President (1981–89) IBM introduced first home or personal computer AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) virus identified Anwar el-Sadat assassinated in Egypt
1982	Church membership reached five million (announced Apr. 1) Term of service for single elders on full-time missions reduced to 18 months (Apr. 2); later changed back to 24 months (Nov. 26, 1984)	Falkland Islands invaded by Argentina Most severe El Niño (1982–83) to date caused worldwide weather anomalies First permanent artificial heart implanted
1983	First regional conference held in London, England (Oct. 16)	Compact disk for public use launched
1984	Museum of Church History and Art in Salt Lake City dedicated (Apr. 4) Area Presidencies appointed (June 24) 1,500th stake organized, Ciudad Obregon Mexico Yaqui Stake, 150 years after first stake was organized in Kirtland, Ohio (Oct. 28)	USSR and other communist bloc countries withdrew from summer Olympic games Toxic gas leak in Bhopal, India, killed over 2,000 people
1985	Freiberg Germany Temple, in then communist-controlled German Democratic Republic, dedicated (June 29) Revised LDS hymnbook published, first in 37 years (Aug. 2) Church Genealogical Library in Salt Lake City dedicated (Oct. 23)	Famine in Ethiopia Mikhail Gorbachev became premier of Soviet Union
	<b>President Spencer W. Kimball died (Nov. 5)</b> <b>Ezra Taft Benson became 13th President of the Church, with Gordon B. Hinckley and Thomas S. Monson as counselors (Nov. 10)</b>	
1986	Seventies quorums in stakes discontinued (Oct. 4)	Nuclear reactor in Chernobyl, Ukraine, exploded; 133,000 evacuated; clouds of fallout affected all of Europe
1987	Church members in Britain commemorated 150th anniversary of first missionary work in Great Britain (July 24–26) Church's Genealogical Department renamed Family History Department (Aug. 15)	
1988	First stake in West Africa organized, Aba Nigeria Stake (May 15) Milestone of 100 million endowments completed for the dead (Aug.) Announcement that Church granted rights for missionary work in German Democratic Republic (Nov. 12)	Earthquake in Armenia killed over 40,000 people
1989	Second Quorum of the Seventy organized (Apr.) Missionaries expelled from West African nation of Ghana (June 14); later allowed to return (Nov. 30, 1990)	Tiananmen Square Massacre in China; 300–400 prodemocracy students killed Oil tanker <i>Valdez</i> hit Alaskan reef, causing one of world's largest oil spills (11 million gallons) Berlin Wall dismantled
1990	<b>Church membership: 7,761,207</b> Tallin Estonia Branch established; first in Soviet Union (Jan. 28) Church released FamilySearch software package to simplify family history research (Apr. 2)	<b>World population: 5.28 billion</b> Hubble telescope launched into space (U.S.) Soviet parliament voted to allow freedom of religious belief
1991	Russian Republic, largest in Soviet Union, granted formal recognition to the Church (June 24) 100th anniversary of founding of the Church in Tonga observed (Aug. 13–27)	South Africa repealed apartheid laws USSR dissolved; became Russian Federation Persian Gulf War
1992	150th anniversary of founding of Relief Society celebrated (Mar. 17) Literacy program sponsored by Relief Society announced (Dec. 15)	Cold War formally ended

	Church History	World History
1993	Refurbished, remodeled Hotel Utah renamed, rededicated the Joseph Smith Memorial Building (June 27) TempleReady computer software announced (Nov. 8)	Public Internet era began Militants bombed World Trade Center, New York City, killing 6 people Channel Tunnel (Chunnel) opened, linking England and France
1994	<b>President Ezra Taft Benson died (May 30)</b> <b>Howard W. Hunter became 14th President of the Church, with Gordon B. Hinckley and Thomas S. Monson as counselors (June 5)</b>	
		Rwandan genocide Nelson Mandela became first black president of South Africa
1995	<b>President Howard W. Hunter died (Mar. 3)</b> <b>Gordon B. Hinckley became 15th President of the Church, with Thomas S. Monson and James E. Faust as counselors (Mar. 12)</b>	
	Position of regional representative discontinued; new position of Area Authority Seventy announced (Apr. 1) First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve issued "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" (Sept. 23)	Yitzhak Rabin assassinated India and Pakistan tested nuclear weapons U.S. troops in Bosnia (to 1996) Earthquake in Kobe, Japan, killed over 5,000 people
1996	Majority of members resided outside of U.S. (Feb. 28)	Mad cow disease hit Britain
1997	Area Authority Seventies organized into three new quorums (Apr. 5) Church members throughout the world commemorated the 150th anniversary of the Mormon pioneers' trek west Construction of small temples announced (Oct. 4)	Scientists cloned sheep Control of Hong Kong returned to China
1998	President Hinckley announced that there would be 100 operating temples by the end of 20th century (Apr. 4)	Europeans agreed on the euro as their single currency
1999	Church launched the FamilySearch Internet Genealogy Service (May 24) Last general conference held in the Tabernacle (Oct. 2–3)	War in Kosovo Panama took over control of Panama Canal from U.S. Australians voted to retain British monarchy as head of state rather than elect president
2000	<b>Church membership: 11,068,861</b>	<b>World population: 6.79 billion</b>
	First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles issued "The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles" (Jan. 1) First general conference held in new Conference Center (Apr. 1–2); Conference Center dedicated (Oct. 8) The 100 millionth copy of Book of Mormon printed; Book of Mormon printed in its 100th language Membership passes 11 million (Sept.); more non-English-speaking members than English-speaking Boston Massachusetts Temple, 100th operating temple, dedicated (Oct. 1)	
2001	Perpetual Education Fund announced (Mar. 31)	After hijacking airplanes, terrorists crashed them into World Trade Center, New York City; the Pentagon, Washington, D.C.; and in a field in Pennsylvania; over 3,000 people killed
2002	Rebuilt Nauvoo Illinois Temple dedicated on 158th anniversary of martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum (June 27)	Winter Olympics held in Salt Lake City, Utah
2003	President Gordon B. Hinckley and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles conducted a first-of-its-kind worldwide leadership training broadcast	Invasion of Iraq by U.S. and Allied forces
2004	Church membership in Mexico surpassed 1,000,000	Massive 30-meter tsunami left 230,000 people dead or missing throughout the Indonesian area Massachusetts became the first state in the U.S. to offer legal marriage to same-sex couples

	Church History	World History
2005	200th anniversary of the birth of Joseph Smith	Death of Pope John Paul II; he played a major role in ending the Cold War and European communism Attacks on London subway trains and a bus killed 56 people, including four bombers with ties to Islamic militants Hurricane Katrina battered Louisiana and Mississippi coastlines (U.S.), resulting in \$60 billion damage and leaving 80% of New Orleans under water
2006	New FamilySearch was made available for all Church members	Violence in Sudan's Darfur region resulted in more than 200,000 deaths
2007		U.S. subprime mortgage crisis triggered financial market turmoil and recession
2008	<b>President Gordon B. Hinckley died (Jan. 27)</b> <b>Thomas S. Monson ordained and set apart as 16th President of the Church, with Henry B. Eyring and Dieter F. Uchtdorf as counselors (Feb. 3)</b>	
	Publication of Santa Biblia, the LDS edition of the Bible in Spanish	Financial crisis seriously impacted world economy
2009	Dedication of the new Church History Library	
2010	<b>Church membership: 14,131,467</b>	<b>World population: 6.85 billion</b>
	Mormon Tabernacle Choir celebrated 100 years of recording	Devastating earthquakes in Haiti and Chile Thirty-three Chilean miners trapped underground after a cave-in and mining accident captured global attention; an estimated 1 billion people across the planet watched their televised rescue An oil spill released 205.8 million gallons of crude oil into the Gulf of Mexico
2011		Existing governments toppled in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya A 9.0-magnitude earthquake off Japan's northeast coast unleashed a tsunami that left nearly 20,000 people dead or missing; the tsunami triggered the worst nuclear crisis since Chernobyl after waves knocked out the cooling system at a nuclear power plant
2012	Age of young men eligible for full-time missions lowered from 19 to 18; age for young women lowered from 21 to 19 (Oct.)	U.S. ambassador killed in Libya U.S. space rover <i>Curiosity</i> successfully landed on Mars













SEMINARIES AND  
INSTITUTES OF RELIGION

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THE CHURCH OF  
JESUS CHRIST  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

ENGLISH

