

Follow the prophet



- **Read the Recent conference address given by the prophet.**
- **Decide What you can do to follow the prophet:**

Tick the Box & date it when you have done it.

[] Date: __/__/__

Seek Ye the Kingdom of God

President Gordon B. Hinckley

I hope that all of you will remember that on this Sabbath day you heard me bear my witness that this is God's holy work.

Gordon B. Hinckley, "Seek Ye the Kingdom of God," *Ensign*, May 2006, 81

My beloved brothers and sisters, I thank you for your prayers in my behalf. I now pray for your sustaining faith.

When a man reaches my age, he pauses now and again to reflect on what has led him to his present status in life.

I feel to indulge upon your time in what might be regarded as a selfish manner. I do so because the life of the President of the Church really belongs to the entire Church. He has very little privacy and no secrets. My talk this morning will be different from any, I think, previously heard in the general conferences of the Church.

I now face the sunset of my life. We are all totally in the hands of the Lord. As many of you know, I recently underwent major surgery. It is

the first time in my 95 years that I have been a patient in a hospital. I do not recommend it to anyone. My doctors say that I still have some residual problems.

I am now approaching my 96th birthday. I take this opportunity to express appreciation and gratitude for the remarkable blessings the Lord has showered upon me.

We all face choices in the course of our lives, some of them with a siren song of wealth and prosperity; others appear less promising. Somehow the Lord has watched over and guided my choices, although it was not always evident at the time.

There come to mind the words of Robert Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken," which concludes with these lines:

***Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.
(The Poetry of Robert Frost, ed. Edward Connery
Lathem [1969], 105)***

I think of the words of the Lord: "Seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you" ([Luke 12:31](#)).

It was 48 years ago at this April conference that I was first sustained as a General Authority. Since that time I have spoken in every general conference of the Church. I have given well over 200 such talks. I have dealt

with a great variety of subjects. But running through all has been a dominant thread of testimony of this great latter-day work.

But things have changed and are changing. My beloved companion of 67 years left me two years ago. I miss her more than I can say. She was really a remarkable woman, one with whom I walked side by side in perfect companionship for more than two-thirds of a century. As I look back upon my life, I do so with a measure of wonder and awe. Everything good that has happened, including my marriage, I owe to my activity in the Church.

I had occasion the other evening to review an incomplete list of societies and organizations that have honored me, all because of my activity in the Church. Presidents of the United States, a substantial number of them, have come to the Office of the Presidency of the Church. I have on my office wall a photograph of my presenting a Book of Mormon to President Ronald Reagan. In my bookcase is the Presidential Medal of Freedom given to me by President Bush. I have been to the White House on a number of occasions. I have hosted and mingled with prime ministers and ambassadors of many nations, including Prime Ministers Margaret Thatcher and Harold Macmillan of the United Kingdom.

I have known and worked with every President of the Church from President Grant down to Howard W. Hunter. I have known and loved all of the General Authorities through these many, many

years.

I am now trying to deal with the many books and artifacts that I have accumulated over the years. In the course of this process I found an old journal with sporadic entries from the years 1951 to 1954. At that time I was a counselor in my stake presidency and had not yet been called as a General Authority.

As I read through this old journal, I recalled with appreciation how, through the kindness of the Lord, I came to know very intimately and well all of the First Presidency and members of the Quorum of the Twelve. Such an opportunity could not now be had by anyone because the Church is much larger.

The journal contains entries such as the following:

“March 11, 1953—President McKay discussed with me the April conference program for mission presidents.

“Thursday, March 19—Joseph Fielding Smith asked that I get one of the Brethren to illustrate handling of Saturday night missionary conferences. ... I believe that Spencer W. Kimball or Mark E. Petersen should take care of it.

“Thursday, March 26—President McKay told an interesting story. He said, ‘A farmer had a large tract of land. When he grew old it became too much for him. He had a family of boys. He called the boys around him and told them they would

have to carry the load. The father rested. But one day he walked out into the field. The boys told him to go back, they did not need his help. He said, "My shadow on this farm is worth more than the labor of all of you." ' President McKay said that the father in the story represented President Stephen L Richards, who was ill, but whose contribution and friendship President McKay valued so highly.

"Friday, April 3, 1953—Attended temple meeting with General Authorities and mission presidents from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. More than 30 mission presidents spoke. All want more missionaries. All making good progress.

"Tuesday, April 14—President Richards at office, had a pleasant visit with him. He appears tired and weak. I feel he has been preserved by the Lord for a great purpose.

"Monday, April 20, 1953—Had an interesting visit with Henry D. Moyle of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

"July 15, 1953—Albert E. Bowen, member of the Council of the Twelve, died after more than a year of serious illness. Another of my friends has gone. ... I got to know him well. He was a wise and steady man. Could never be rushed, and was never in a rush. Extremely deliberate—a man of uncommon wisdom, a man of great and simple faith. The old, wise heads are passing on. They were my friends. In my brief time I have seen many of the great men of the Church come and go.

Most of them I have worked with and known intimately. Time has a way of erasing their memory. Another five years and such names as Merrill, Widtsoe, Bowen—all powerful figures—will be forgotten by all but a few. A man must get his satisfaction from his work each day, must recognize that his family may remember him, that he may count with the Lord, but beyond that, small will be his monument among the coming generations.”

And so it goes. I read it only to illustrate the remarkable relationship I had as a young man with members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve.

During my years I have also walked among the impoverished and poor of the earth and shared with them my love, my concern, and my faith. I have associated with men and women of privilege and stature from many parts of the earth. Through these opportunities I hope I have made at least a small difference.

When I was a young man, a mere boy of 11, I received a patriarchal blessing from a man I had never seen before and never saw thereafter. It is a remarkable document, a prophetic document. It is personal, and I will not read extensively from it. However, it contains this statement: “The nations of the earth shall hear thy voice and be brought to a knowledge of the truth by the wonderful testimony which thou shalt bear.”

When I was released from my mission in England,

I took a short trip on the continent. I had borne my testimony in London; I did so in Berlin and again in Paris and later in Washington, D.C. I said to myself that I had borne my testimony in these great capitals of the world and had fulfilled that part of my blessing.

That proved to be a mere scratching of the surface. Since then I have lifted my voice on every continent, in cities large and small, all up and down from north to south and east to west across this broad world—from Cape Town to Stockholm, from Moscow to Tokyo to Montreal, in every great capital of the world. It is all a miracle.

Last year I asked members of the Church throughout the world to again read the Book of Mormon. Thousands, even hundreds of thousands, responded to that challenge. The Prophet Joseph said in 1841, “I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book” (*History of the Church*, 4:461).

Accepting the truth of this statement, I think something remarkable must have happened to the people of this Church. They were observed reading the Book of Mormon while riding the bus, while eating lunch, while in the doctor’s office waiting room, and in scores of other situations. I trust and hope that we have drawn closer to God because of the reading of this book.

Last December it was my privilege, together with many of you, to honor the Prophet Joseph on the 200th anniversary of his birth. With Elder Ballard, I was at his birthplace in Vermont while this great Conference Center was filled with Latter-day Saints and the word was carried by satellite transmission across the world in tribute to the beloved Prophet of this great latter-day work.

And so I might go on. I apologize again for speaking in a personal vein. However, I do so only as an expression of appreciation and gratitude for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, all of this coming to pass because of the place in which the Lord has put me. My heart is overwhelmed with gratitude and love.

To repeat:

***Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.***

I trust that you will not regard what I have said as an obituary. Rather, I look forward to the opportunity of speaking to you again in October.

Now, in conclusion, I hope that all of you will remember that on this Sabbath day you heard me bear my witness that this is God's holy work. The vision given the Prophet Joseph in the grove of Palmyra was not an imaginary thing. It was real. It occurred in the broad light of day. Both the Father and the Son spoke to the boy. He saw Them standing in the air above him. He heard

Their voices. He gave heed to Their instruction.

It was the resurrected Lord who was introduced by His Father, the great God of the universe. For the first time in recorded history, both the Father and the Son appeared together to part the curtains and open this, the last and final dispensation, the dispensation of the fulness of times.

The Book of Mormon is all that it purports to be—a work recorded by prophets who lived anciently and whose words have come forth “to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations” (Book of Mormon [title page](#)).

The priesthood has been restored under the hands of John the Baptist and Peter, James, and John. All the keys and authority pertaining to eternal life are exercised in this Church.

Joseph Smith was and is a prophet, the great Prophet of this dispensation. This Church, which carries the name of the Redeemer, is true.

I leave you my testimony, my witness, and my love for each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.