

PRESIDENT DAVID O. McKAY

1873-1970

We have asked a number of people, of various age and experience and place, who have known David O. McKay as their Prophet and the President of their Church, to express their feelings at his death.

MY MEMORIES OF PRESIDENT DAVID O. McKAY

My first recollection of David O. McKay is a sermon he gave in a Sacrament Meeting which led me as a teenager to engage in critical self-examination and to leave the meeting with high resolve.

Despite the nervousness and excitement I felt in getting married, I still remember three principles he gave my wife and me forty years ago, in his introductory remarks preceding his celebration of our marriage: live within your means, practice the courtesy and chivalry of courtship throughout your marriage, and trust one another and be worthy of that trust, "for to be trusted is greater than to be loved."

Over a period of about thirty years while engaged in teaching religion to L.D.S. college youth, I was privileged either at his invitation or my request to have a half-dozen conversations with him about questions critical to me at the time. Looking back I marvel at the trust he placed in me, at his tolerance for those who disagreed with him—a prophet of God—and at his love of life in its intellectual, aesthetic, social, as well as spiritual dimensions.

President McKay invited me in to see him as I began in the innocence and inexperience of youth to teach religion in a college environment. After drawing me out on a number of issues, his only advice was, "Be true to yourself and loyal to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and whatever else you do will be all right." Not long thereafter, I returned with questions about evolution and family planning. "What shall I teach in these areas?" I asked. Very wisely, he replied, "What is your belief?" And then in gracious response he supported and amplified my fumbling beginnings of a position statement.

He gave me the feeling that we were thinking together, that he was incorporating my reflections into his own.

Years later he invited me to speak at a General Priesthood meeting on the subject of courtship and marriage. He wanted me to discourage going steady and teen-age marriages and to inspire the youth of the Church to prepare more realistically and ideally for marriage. I suggested that the talk would be most effective if he were to give it, to which he replied, "They think we are old fuddy-duddies, but they will listen to you." I asked, "Would you like to review what I plan to say in advance?" "No," he answered, "You will know best what to say."

President McKay placed confidence in others. He respected other men's thinking. Commenting on a T.V. discussion, he asked, "Who was that man on T.V. with you last week? Is he a member of the Church?" I answered "Yes, and a very fine one of intellectual acumen and great integrity. However, he does his own thinking." President McKay responded with a smile, "There's nothing wrong with that, is there?"

On another occasion several of us from the University of Utah visited with President McKay concerning a problem on the borderline of science and religion. Some Latter-day Saint professors of geology had been made to feel heretical by statements spoken with authority which denied their scientific experience. President McKay listened attentively and agreed with the basic position of geology regarding the age of the earth. And then he said of the other position, with great tolerance and graciousness: "The Church has taken no official stand on this question. Each one of us gives his own opinion and my friend has a right to his even as you and I have a right to our own."

My finest experience with President McKay was when I took a personal problem of a student-friend to him—a problem which had deeply hurt the young man and his family. In the interest of human considerations, President McKay made an exception to traditional Church procedure, acting swiftly. The justification for his action, in which he recognized he may have erred on the side of mercy, he expressed in these words, "When problems of this kind come to me, I say to myself: someday I shall stand before God and what will he say?"

David O. McKay was a charismatic leader who enjoyed a divine gift of grace. He was a "candle of the Lord," a prophet of God. What a privilege to have known such a man.

Lowell L. Bennion
Salt Lake City, Utah

TRIBUTE TO PRESIDENT DAVID O. MCKAY

I do not hesitate and without reservation repeat from this remote end of the big wide world the very often heard expression from the lips of about three million people who have accepted the message of the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ in these the last days: "He was surely a true Prophet, Seer and Revelator," who presided over Christ's Church for many years.

I learned from my parents that David O. McKay was the first Apostle and Special Witness of Christ who set foot on the soil of Samoa since the Restoration of the Church in 1830, through Joseph Smith, Jr., the Prophet. On that visit of 1921, President McKay and his companion, Brother H. Cannon, had to travel on horses to Sauniatu school, which is twenty miles east of the Mission Home in Pesega, so he could bless members of the Church. The saints and the students (young boys and girls) in Sauniatu were fully filled with the spirit of rejoicing and of appreciation that an Apostle showed his personal interest and true love for them. I am told that after feasting and entertainments President McKay and his party were to return to Headquarters. They mounted their horses and started on their long trip. The saints and students formed a crowd following President McKay and his party and the band, led by my father, Alisa F. Toelupe, led the crowd, playing "Good Bye, My Feleni (Friend)," with the crowd singing. President McKay's heart was deeply touched. He stopped his horse, and as he looked behind he observed the crowd following. He turned his horse around and returned to meet his beloved people. When the crowd of Sauniatu Saints, children, and the band met President McKay and his party, Pres. McKay felt the need to leave his blessings with these saints. He did not worry about the long ride before him but asked the saints one and all to join him in prayer — and he invoked a blessing which is written in the hearts of the saints who were present. This blessing was later written down by Brother Su'a Kipeni, who acted as interpreter. A few days later the saints, though poor, decided to build a monument to Apostle McKay's name in memory of his visit, of his love, and of his great interest in them. This was done, and the prayer concealed inside a bottle and buried within the monument.

Thirty-four years later, in 1955, David O. McKay was the first President, Prophet, Seer and Revelator of the Latter-day Church to set foot in Samoa. One of the greatest blessings that has come to me, though it came in great surprise, was the privilege of being appointed by the Mission Presidency at that time to be *President McKay's Interpreter*.

I had associated with this great man and had felt his great love toward his fellow man on various occasions. As his interpreter, while he and Sister McKay visited Samoa for four or five days, my wife Tava'etoto and I had the rare privilege of sitting very close to President and Sister McKay in meetings and helping them along in many activities they engaged in in Samoa.

Two weeks before his arrival President McKay's doctors were so concerned about his health that they contacted President Howard B. Stone of the Samoan Mission, requesting the Mission President to keep the public away from their prophet, who was eighty-one years of age at the time. Instructions advising the saints were prepared, translated into Samoan, and then sent out to the districts and branches of the Mission.

He set foot in Samoa at Pago Pago harbor. About one half hour before his ship arrived, a heavy rain started pouring from the heavens. The saints in Tutuila, American Samoa, were somewhat disappointed. They thought their welcome activities would not be displayed at the arrival of their prophet

and his good wife. Non-members' sarcastic expressions about the saints were heard. These mocking remarks got to the point that some of the Mormons felt ashamed. But, as soon as the ship President and Sister McKay were on entered the mouth of Pago Pago harbor, the rain simultaneously gradually stopped. At the time President and Sister McKay set foot on the wharf, the proud saints of American Samoa, with President and Sister Stone of the Samoan Mission, hit the air with "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." "Surely, he is a real man of God" was the expression by many prominent non-members who were at the scene.

His love was so great toward the saints that he went to the people and shook their hands, put his arm around them, young and old. This incident of his trip in Pago Pago is still remembered to this moment. "Surely, he is truly a man of God."

He shook my hand and looked at my eyes and I could see my soul deep in the back of his bright eyes. I knew it did not take a minute for him to know everything about me. He was such a great leader that kindness comforted my fear at the moment. I felt the warmth of his clean hand touching my weak hand. The tone of his voice when he said to me "Talofa" was full of love. My fear disappeared and was replaced with joy and rejoicing. He uplifted my heart and I felt a new life and a new strength, physically and spiritually.

He promised the saints that he would shake every one's hand if they attended Sunday Evening Session of the conference in the Pesega School auditorium, and regardless of his doctor's advice because of his health, President McKay so loved his Father in Heaven's children in this far end of the earth, that he forgot his health and shook hands with over 2000 people that Sunday evening. He did not miss any one who wanted to touch the Lord's Prophet, Seer and Revelator and President of His only true Church on earth. I was privileged to stand beside this great and righteous man. It was a marvelous and a wondrous experience how he reached out to meet people so that he would not miss one person. Blessings accompanied him every minute of his tour. People who were in bed for many years were made well just by President McKay visiting them.

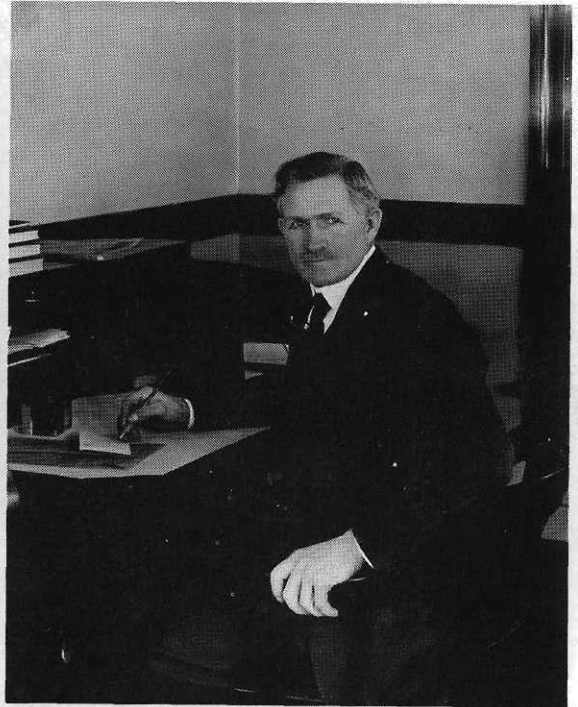
Every time I had the chance of standing beside him to translate his messages (I want the world to know this) I did feel a very strong warm relaxing and comforting spirit surrounding Pres. McKay. His promises made in Samoa have gradually come true: Our Church has the best system of education in Samoa now; because of these schools and the temple he prophesied would be built in the South Pacific, faithful saints who remain in Samoa are receiving God's blessings in Samoa without spending much money to go outside of Samoa to receive those blessings; we have stakes organized in Samoa whereby the complete program of the Priesthood is now operated in Samoa in its fulness. The saints here are enjoying the fulfillment of these promises.

Pres. McKay was truly a man of God. I know of no other man who has done more for God's children in Samoa than President McKay. I can

never forget what a marvelous thing he has done me personally. He loved the Lord so much that he extended to me, a common man, such an opportunity and a sacred privilege to stand near him, the prophet of God, to act as his Samoan interpreter.

Nearly every Samoan family remembers Pres. McKay in their family prayers morning and night, as well as in all other meetings where prayer is offered. Pres. McKay was a true Prophet, Seer, and Revelator; President of the Church, a great teacher and leader and a most successful missionary.

Lafi Toelupe
Leone, American Samoa



President McKay as president of the British Mission (left) and as superintendent of the Deseret Sunday School Union.

A MAN OF LOVE AND PERSONAL CONCERN

I have had but few opportunities to come close to David O. McKay, but each time has proved to be personal, memorable, and cherished deeply. I have sensed that I have had a rare opportunity in communing with one of God's chosen spirits.

In 1916, when I went from my parents' home in Palo Alto to teach in a Utah high school, I spent several weekends in Huntsville, the birthplace and boyhood home of President McKay. He had already been an apostle for ten years. I had grown up in California and he was the first of the authorities of the Church I had met; the charm and magnetism and spirituality of this young man of forty-three was apparent to me and the others

at a simple ward party I visited. We all enjoyed his lively interest. They were all proud to claim him as their own.

Sometime between 1931 and 1938 he came to Palo Alto Ward at times to visit his son Llewelyn, who was attending Stanford University. My husband, the bishop, called him to the stand, and we all enjoyed his messages to us, full of encouragement and enlightenment. He always showed much love and personal concern.

In 1963, my husband and I embarked upon a new experience, and President McKay's wiggly little signatures on two missionary calls to the Scottish Mission are still greatly cherished by us both. While at the Mission Home, we ate all of our meals in the basement of the Hotel Utah, near the barbershop which President McKay patronized each morning, and we had a number of encounters with him. Some of the young missionaries, hoping to serve him in some small personal way, got the idea to walk him back to his apartment, but later reported that they had to run to keep up with him.

When we told him that we were on our way to his beloved Scotland, the land of his forefathers and his own earlier missionary labors, he just beamed, thrilled and happy to hear this news, and visited with us in his gracious manner.

We love and honor President McKay among the great of our times and will try to live so that we will meet him again. He was truly a man of God. He drew many of the great of the world into his presence, by his wisdom and his dedication to his calling — men who recognized that he would enrich their lives and perhaps help them to understand their problems and possible solutions.

Myra Thulin
Palo Alto, California

“WHEN SPIRIT SPEAKS TO SPIRIT”

The deep sense of sorrow that I felt upon hearing of the passing of the prophet was incurred not because of any direct relationship I've had with him, nor was it the type of remorse that is prompted by the anticipation of missing or being without a loved one.

My sorrow was motivated by a fear, a fear that was couched in the recognition that there are those members of the Church, i.e., new converts, young people, etc., who have known President McKay only as a white haired man who because of the aging process needed to be assisted constantly and who “usually spoke about the family” rather than as a vigorous, athletic, inspired Prophet, with profound insights on making this life a great experience.

I've resented the demeaning attitudes of some within and outside the Church who respected the kindly David O. McKay, but felt he never spoke out on the major contemporary issues. His discourses on the Family, Fatherhood, Motherhood, the Christ-like acts, etc., were felt by some to be “skirting

the real issues of our time." My personal life has been enriched by the counsel of President McKay because, for me, rather than skirting issues he went straight to the very core of the problems of our society.

The central problem of our society and our larger world community is the lack of Christ-like character. Poverty, immorality, man's inhumanity to man, violence, etc., the influences that Professor Toynbee found to be destructive of any civilization, are the *results* of the lack of the Christ-like character in man. President McKay dealt with the *cause* of these problems. His was the voice of a prophet who was concerned with the *prevention* of the social disorders of our time. President McKay's writings were not the philosophical exercises of a Pratt or Talmage, but rather a penetration through the superficial into some of the very practical everyday acts that *any man, anywhere, in any situation* could do to bring into his life the peace and serenity that come only with putting into practice the gentle and emphatic principles of Christ.

To me, David O. McKay was the paradigmatic man of our dispensation in exemplifying, through the written and spoken word, the rewards of Christian living. I've felt that no man with whose life I've been acquainted has lived this type of life more profoundly than he. For this reason I have become greatly concerned to search out, through studying the insights of this man, the keys to the happy life for myself, and I have personally resolved that my children and the university students I teach and counsel at the L.D.S. Institute at Stanford will have further opportunities to know the prophet. It would be a great tragedy if the writings of President McKay, with their sense of urgency as it relates to the *family as the vehicle by which personalities and attitudes can be changed*, were to end up as "dust collectors" in our personal libraries.

There is a need in our Church to respond to the living prophet, Joseph Fielding Smith, and to his insights and clarifications, but there is also the necessity for us to reread and retell and reacquaint ourselves with the inspiration and revelations which were given to the living prophet of the 1950's and 60's.

Perhaps my fears that the Gospel as mediated by the prophet will have its impact diminished with time are unjustified, but my desire is that his writings and insight should live on. *Not as mere memorial*—for this would have been repugnant to him, but rather because the joy, happiness and sense of awareness of the good life which I've found are a direct result of "the secrets of the happy life" which flowed from the pen of David O. McKay. I've become a better man, a better husband, a better father because of the application of the above suggested principles. Only my wife and God really know how true and significant that change has been.

President McKay's spirit has spoken to my spirit through the written word, and I was edified; and because I was edified I could give of self to my family, friends, and neighbors.

Joseph C. Muren
Sunnyvale, California

REFLECTIONS ON THE MINISTRY OF PRESIDENT DAVID O. MCKAY

It is not difficult to identify the large difference that President McKay has made in the character and historical movement of the Church. I refer to the obvious fact that especially during the period of his presidency the Church has broken some of its parochial bonds and hopefully has begun to move toward universality. At least there are evidences that this is the case, and I doubt that anything as important as this has happened to the Church in the past century.

To conserve and strengthen its community character and at the same time overcome the limits which the community ideal inevitably imposes upon it is the most difficult task which confronts the Church. Here, it seems to me, is where President McKay exhibited his special strength as a leader.

The recent stirring of the Church toward universalism is represented not so much by its missionary expansion as by its building "foreign" temples, not by any change in doctrine, but by a change in disposition. The Church has always had quite extensive missions, but with the exception of the Polyne-sians served by the Hawaiian Temple, the converts came to America to become full-fledged Mormons. The doctrines taught and believed in foreign climes have been the same as those taught and believed in Utah, but a part of one's conversion to the gospel, if he were a native of Europe, South America, or the Orient, was to learn to sing the songs of Zion, to join the "gathering" to Israel, and all too often to abandon precious values in his native culture to become a "Utah" Mormon. In our romantic and sentimental moments we are sometimes inordinately attached to the ways and attitudes of the past which identify our faith with Western American geography and social behavior. But I hope that a new era has begun in Mormonism, an era of higher and broader horizons, of a finer sense of the universal quality that properly belongs to religion.

A variety of social, political, and economic as well as religious forces are active in breaking through the parochial character of Mormonism. During the years of President McKay's administration the Church was affected by the large social forces which followed upon the Second War: the remarkable increase in world trade, travel, and communications, the advances of technology, increasing industrialization, and the movement toward world unity symbolized by the United Nations or expressed in the ecumenical trends within Christianity. I am afraid that much of the ecumenical spirit has passed us Mormons by, mainly because of our preoccupation with ourselves and the condition of our own faith. But that in this period the Church began to enlarge its perspectives on its place in the world, magnifying its vision, and moving, though slowly, toward an identification of itself with all men, was surely due in large part to President McKay's own moral disposition and ideals, ideals which were inclusive rather than exclusive, which included rather than excluded his fellowmen. That from an early date he possessed a quality of world-mindedness not commonly found in the Church is known

to all who have followed his ministry. It was a world-mindedness made possible not so much through his acquaintance with the world, which was extensive, as through his insight into the condition of the human soul.

I am concerned, of course, not with the recent rapid growth of the Church or its geographic extent, but rather with transformation in its character. The importance of our becoming a Church which in some way embraces the world rather than simply calls men "out of the world" to settle in the valleys of Western America, can best be seen by a glimpse or two of religion in the past. I have in mind the magnificent transformation of the religion of Israel when its prophets gained the vision of their God as the God of all mankind. Or Paul's determination that Christianity was to be a religion of the world, a conviction which defeated those who would have kept it a sect of Judaism.

Universality as a religious ideal is possible only where there is an authentic conception of the reality of the individual, a genuine concern for his dignity and worth, and a full measure of human sympathy. It was not an accident that Jeremiah, who may have been the first of the prophets to declare unequivocally that there is only one God and that he is the God of all men and all nations, was also the first to clearly champion the moral freedom and responsibility of the individual. Nor was it an accident that in teaching that Christ came to save all men, Paul declared that each is precious in the sight of God. I believe that the universalism of President McKay, his identification with humanity, was grounded in his respect and concern for the individual, his reverence for the freedom and autonomy of the moral will, his sympathy and compassion for every person.

My point, then, is a very simple one: that President David O. McKay, whom we knew and loved as a charismatic leader and friend, combined the virtues of kindness, compassion, love, and profound commitment to the moral and intellectual freedom of every person with a strong consciousness of the unity of mankind and the ideal possibilities of human brotherhood. We may hope that future historians will find that his ideal was in fact the beginning of a new era for the Church.

Sterling M. McMurrin
Salt Lake City, Utah

THE PROPHET IS DEAD

The prophet is dead. Feeling a special quiet in the chapel this morning I sensed others were experiencing his going too. What did this mean to me? Why my tears and sorrow? Surely he was old enough to die. The Church would continue. Was his death stopping something for me? Why sorrow?

Not finding answers in my sorrow I turned to my joy and then I knew. Here was a great human man, a prophet, who had freely given himself to others. Because I had received of his giving I cried. This sorrow I felt at his dying was a reflection of the joy I had experienced in his living — the self he gave and the message.

The summer I was nineteen I worked in the Church office building. I had come from Florida, a convert who had never seen a prophet. I had hoped that by working in the same building, one day by chance I would see him. It was very important to me that I see a prophet. The last week of my summer job I went to President McKay's secretary and explained my desire to see the prophet and asked if she would tell me his coming and going schedule so that I might see him. Accepting my desire and persistence she told me to come in the following day at the time President McKay would be coming out of his office to check his schedule with her. The next morning, when he came to her desk, she called me over and introduced me. I remember well



that great big man with deep, still eyes looking down into my face and extending his hand. As we shook hands he invited me into his office and there offered me a chair. The visit must have only been five minutes but to me it could have been a wonderful hour. He was unhurried. He asked me how I was but before I answered I sensed he already knew my deep inner feelings. As our brief visit ended he said, "You're from Tallahassee. Oh, we have a wonderful little branch in Tallahassee." You would have to have lived there then to know it was a branch with highly unusual love and support among its members, but President McKay seemed to know this and sent love and greetings to the Saints there.

This all comes back as a memory of his giving self, who thought everyone was important and worthwhile.

The message came much later. I was no longer a young girl full of fervor and belief and he was no longer a great big man in stature. I attended the opening of the Oakland Temple and heard President McKay offer the dedicatory prayer. Before I heard the prophet pray I had been full of questions and so spiritually hungry that I hurt deep in my soul. When he prayed, what I heard, as if for the first time, was gratitude for our relationship to God, for the mission of Christ, and for the beautiful commandment that we love one another. I came hungry and I was fed.

Mona Jo Ellsworth
Palo Alto, California

ON SHAKING HANDS WITH DAVID O. MCKAY

There were advantages and disadvantages to living across the street from Brother and Sister McKay. On Sunday we couldn't play football in the street because there was always the possibility that President David O. McKay would drive up in his big, black Buick to visit his grandson. The first time he came we were caught passing the football in the middle of the street. President McKay just smiled and waved, but we felt as if we had committed a felony. Playing football on the Sabbath was one thing, but being seen playing football by the prophet was another. After the first encounter we always played in the back yard on Sunday afternoon. Whenever the Buick was spotted, we'd put the football down and walk around the house to wave and greet President McKay. We didn't see him often, but often enough that we felt we knew him personally.

This special relationship to the prophet of God was always a source of pride. Whenever I would tell my friends and relatives about it, I made it sound as if we were on a first-name basis. Each time President McKay would visit his grandson, I wanted to go shake his hand, introduce myself, and tell him that I was a Teacher in the Aaronic priesthood. But when the younger children ran right up and said hello, I kept my distance and watched the way he spoke to them. He was an old man, but his eyes and face were deeply alive. I don't think I had a very full conception of the meaning of the words "prophet, seer, and revelator," but I knew that there was something unique about this man. Something that made him easy to honor and love.

One Fast Sunday a year or two later, I was officiating at the sacrament table when I saw President McKay come into the rear of the chapel. He was coming to bless his newest great-grandchild. I didn't know of any set procedure for when the prophet came to Sacrament Meeting, but it seemed perfectly natural when everyone stood up in respectful silence. Everything took on a different significance that day. Blessing the sacrament was not just reading a card, it was blessing the emblems of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The weight of the covenants made in partaking of the sacrament also seemed heavier than I remembered in the past. The deacon who was to pass the sacrament to President McKay was so nervous that his face was red and hot

with perspiration. I was a little nervous myself, but the sacrament was administered reverently and even the babies who were to be blessed were quiet.

When President McKay blessed his great-granddaughter it wasn't loud enough for everyone to hear, and I was a little disappointed. But the prophet's presence affected the way I listened to the testimonies. Instead of my usual critical approach to everything said in Testimony meeting, I listened and even prayed that the Holy Ghost would inspire those who wanted to bear their testimonies. I didn't feel my usual embarrassment when an elderly sister bore the same testimony I had heard her bear every month since I had moved into the ward. Just when I was expecting the bishop to stand and close the meeting, President McKay got up and walked to the pulpit.

After eight years I don't remember what he said to the congregation that day, but I do remember knowing that I was listening to a prophet. I was concentrating so intensely on the man, how he looked and what he said, that everything was hazy except the prophet's face. The bishop stood up after President McKay's testimony, closed the meeting, announced that we would sing "We Thank Thee O God for a Prophet" as our closing hymn, and that his first counsellor would close with prayer. Our ward had never been known for the volume of its singing, but that Fast Sunday we made up for our previous lack of enthusiasm. I sang as loud as I dared—no particular part, just somewhere between the soprano and bass notes.

At the close of the meeting the entire congregation formed a line to go up on the stand and shake hands with President McKay. It seemed like a long time to wait to shake someone's hand, and I remember feeling a slight resentment for some of the older brothers and sisters who stopped to talk. I thought the line would move faster when the children and young people started shaking hands with the prophet. But no one hurried us and President McKay was interested in speaking personally with the children. As I got nearer to President McKay my eyes got moist and I didn't have a handkerchief. I decided not to wipe my eyes and tried to convince myself that it was just hay fever acting up. I looked straight into President McKay's eyes and shook his hand. He was smiling and I smiled and even my watery eyes smiled. The prophet turned to Bishop Andrew and said, "Bishop, you have some fine young people in this ward."

I walked down from the stand and out of the chapel into the sunny afternoon. I was glad that I could walk home by myself and think about what had happened. I hadn't even introduced myself and yet at the time it seemed unimportant. Maybe I felt the way I did because I knew that he was a prophet and spoke with God; perhaps it was because I was a Latter-day Saint and he was our leader. It was difficult for me to analyze things on an empty stomach, so I decided to forego any conclusions and go home to dinner.

That was the last time I saw President McKay at a personal distance. My life has changed in many ways in the eight years since that meeting. I've been away to school, I've served as a missionary in England, my understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ has matured, and yet my belief that David O. McKay was and is a prophet of God has remained constant. My knowl-

edge of the purpose of a prophet, seer, and revelator has increased, but my testimony that God does speak to men in this day is primarily based on personal experience with David O. McKay when the Church was little more than a habit in my life.

Scott Cameron
Stanford University

PRESIDENT MCKAY AS A NEIGHBOR

[Recorded as told to a group of children at a Family Home Evening]

My grandfather used to say "There's lots and lots of 'man-ism' in Mormonism." Often we see President McKay and we think and talk of him as the prophet. I grew up in the same little valley in Northern Utah where he was from, and we saw him and thought of him as a man, of the real things he did as our neighbor.

You've read a lot about President McKay, heard a lot about him; you hear about him at Church and even in the paper and you read about him even though we live a long way from Utah. I'd like to tell you about a man you've probably never heard about—a man named Jesse Wilbur. Even though you've never heard about him he was a very important person to us. All those who knew him loved him very much, and I should tell you that he was a very good friend of President McKay. Probably they were boys together; they were about the same age. At one time President McKay's father was chosen to be the bishop of the ward in Eden (a small town near Huntsville, where the McKays lived) and for awhile they had sort of a traveling arrangement, so President McKay probably attended church in Eden some of the time and this is probably where he got to know Jesse Wilbur. Jesse grew up and President McKay grew up and became famous and traveled all over the world. Jesse might have taken short trips to Ogden and Salt Lake but he mainly stayed close to Eden. He ran "the shop," that's what he called it. We used to go to the shop lots of times and at the shop he had a forge. He had the gas pumps with gas for the cars, but the really important thing was that he was a blacksmith. If any of the farm machinery needed repairing, he did it. One of my favorite things was to go with my dad when he took our two big horses down to the shop to have new shoes put on them.

Probably the only time that Jesse's name was in the paper was when he died, and many people wouldn't think of him as an important person. But he was an important person to us, and he was always good to us when we were little children. He used to keep candy at the shop so we could have some candy when he came; he'd always talk to us and he asked us about things that were important.

Jesse always used to have a cigar. He didn't smoke the cigar, but he chewed on it and I never saw him without it. He had a big mark on his lips and actually he would chew and eat some of it and probably spit the rest out, I don't know. But it was just a part of Jesse; if you didn't see the

cigar you didn't see Jesse. Jesse was not a member of the Mormon Church and he was one of the very few people who lived up in Huntsville or Eden who were not L.D.S. His wife belonged to the Church and he had his children baptized, but he was never a member of the Church.

President McKay would talk to Jesse about the Church and about the Gospel. All the people who lived there were betting among themselves whether Jesse would join the Church, because they knew he loved President McKay and President McKay loved him and President McKay certainly loved the Church. And so President McKay would come to Jesse and talk and talk and talk. As it so happened, Jesse did not ever join the Church and he died some years ago. Maybe his cigar had something to do with it, I don't know. But even though Jesse was not an important man to lots of other people, President McKay, who at the time of Jesse's death was a very important man who had even met with presidents of the United States and kings and queens, came up to this little town of Eden and spoke at Jesse's funeral. They were very good friends.

Whenever President McKay had a chance, he would bring his horses over for Jesse to take care of. He had a favorite horse called Sonny Boy that he always used to ride and he'd come over and spend the whole afternoon talking with Jesse and sometimes, just by accident, I would happen to be down at the shop when he came to visit. Winter in that valley is very cold, with lots of snow, and the first time I saw President McKay as a little girl (he wasn't President then) he was over at the shop. He looked to me like a giant of a man. When I was older he didn't seem quite as large, but he had big shoulders and big hands and he stood quite tall and even then I remember he had that beautiful white hair. He had a great big fur coat on the first time I saw him, and I'll always remember him in his fur coat because I had never seen a man wear a fur coat. (Not too long ago, I saw a photo of him in the *Improvement Era* and he was out on a sleigh ride in the winter and had on that same fur coat.) While I was there at the shop he spoke to me, although he didn't know my name. He always spoke to all of us there and I remember he put his hand on my head. It was a great big hand; I guess I thought maybe his hand was really heavy because he was such a big man, but he was very, very gentle.

President McKay kept his horses up at Huntsville; he always had Sonny Boy and some other horses and he'd bring his family up in the winter and they would hitch their horses to a sleigh and go sleigh riding and in the summer they would ride the horses. He had a man who happened to be a relative of ours who would take care of his horses when he wasn't there because they had to be fed every day. This man's name was Harold Newly and it just so happened that about four or five years ago Harold Newly had a heart attack and died and his beloved wife was lonesome and upset. There was a big funeral for Harold and all his friends came and all the people came to tell her how much they loved her and that they would help her and all this sort of thing. But then there came a time when all the friends left and she was all alone, and that's the time when it's difficult, when you need someone

to give you love, someone you can really depend upon. She had noticed that a car had been parked across from her house most of the afternoon, and finally after everyone had left and she was alone and feeling the most terribly lonesome, a man got out of the car and came to her doorstep and said that he came because President McKay, who hadn't been able to come because he was very ill then and couldn't travel that much, had sent him, saying that Laverna (that was the lady's name) would need someone very much, after everyone else was gone; he brought a beautiful bouquet of two dozen red roses from President McKay. To me this tells what a sensitive, sensitive man he was, to know that that was the time when she would need him the most and to send the roses.

You know, the people who lived up there were very proud because President McKay was the prophet of the Church, but they never called him President McKay, even when he became president. All the people who lived up in that area sort of felt he belonged to them and so as I grew up I never heard people at home call President McKay by that name. They always called him David O. They never called him Dave, never were disrespectful, but always called him by his first name.

As I said in the beginning, my grandfather always said there was a lot of "man-ism" in Mormonism and sometimes we forget this, that the leaders of the Church are human beings. Not to detract anything at all from President McKay, because he was such a great man, but you know, even though he was the prophet and president of the Church, he had a fault, one fault I knew about. Maybe he had others. But one fault we all knew about. Lots of times when we were either riding down through Ogden Canyon or coming back up from Ogden or maybe just driving around one of these roads, we'd pass him and we always knew him because he drove a particular kind of big black car and we'd see the white hair. That's all we would have time to see because he would flash by as fast as he could go. He had one fault; he liked to drive too fast. And the people used to joke about it because he drove much too fast for safety. They would say, "Well, I guess he thinks the Lord won't let anything happen to him, but what about the rest of us?". As he did become older, I think finally his family insisted that he have someone to chauffeur him. They felt it was not safe because he still drove just as fast though he probably didn't have as good reflexes as when he was a younger man. So later on, everyone felt a little safer when he would come with either his son or someone else in the family driving.

It was not an easy thing for someone from that locality to work for the kind of education he had. In his day he was well educated for that area. It was not a common thing. The majority of the people there might have gone on to some school but the central aim was to go back to the farm for a lot of them, so that it was unusual for him to move out and go into the field of education. He certainly didn't do it because anyone else was doing it. But I never heard anyone in my family resenting his moving beyond. There was a great deal of pride that he was a son of the valley and he had done this.

Those are the things I remember about him and about the little place where I grew up. Growing up there was like being held in a soft cocoon for a number of years, because you were so protected and so many people loved you and cared about you. It was difficult in lots of ways. The worst part of it that I remember was the winter. It was extremely cold and as a little girl we didn't have central heating at all. We had coal, and it was my job and my brothers' to keep the coal bucket full and to bring what we called kindling, the little scraps of wood to start the fire. We always had to get up in the morning to a cold house until the fire could be burning bright, and we always had to go to bed in an icy cold bedroom, so I was always glad when it was spring. When President McKay was a little boy, quite young, his daddy was sent on a mission back to Scotland, and the boys (President McKay had two or three other brothers but he was the oldest) had to stay and do all the farming; that meant all the work to produce the food, go get the wood (because then they wouldn't have had coal), to raise the animals and kill some of them sometimes for meat, and all this these young boys had to do to help their mother. And their mother had to work because their father was gone (for two years as I remember) back to Scotland.

So as President McKay grew up it was not an easy boyhood in lots of ways, and he worked very hard. He always loved his home in that valley and he always thought his boyhood was a great contributor to his success in later life. He never forgot the people who lived there and was always good to them and always loved them. I think growing up there did contribute somewhat to his greatness.

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