

## GORDON B. HINCKLEY (1910–2008)

Gordon B. Hinckley remained a vital leader of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints until the very end of his illustrious and prophetic life. President Hinckley's de facto guidance of the LDS church spanned over twenty-three years. Called to be an apostle forty-six years ago, he moved into the First Presidency as a third counselor during the last days of Spencer W. Kimball. Following that, he served for a decade under Presidents Ezra Taft Benson and Howard W. Hunter, who were in precarious health. In 1995, President Hinckley assumed the mantle of prophet and president.

Consequently, he leaves a legacy that stretches far beyond the past thirteen years. Although much has been said about his decision to take temples to the far corners of the world, that is only a part of his effort to globalize the Church. Other steps included expanding humanitarian aid wherever needed, creating the Perpetual Education Fund to assist members in less affluent areas, and calling European-born Dieter F. Uchtdorf to the Council of the Twelve. He also led an endeavor to revitalize Salt Lake City by building the new 21,000-seat Conference Center and authorizing the renovation of the Church-owned business blocks near Temple Square.

This was accomplished by means of a robust American economy as well as the Church's decision to centralize budgets, operating costs, and missionary expenses. It allowed a quick response to spiritual and physical needs around the world. Gone was the delay of requiring local agencies to raise portions of necessary funding. Gordon B. Hinckley felt a sense of urgency and responded accordingly.

From the perspective of *Dialogue*, the Church under President Hinckley evolved toward a greater appreciation of free expression of ideas, research, and thought. The intellectual tensions of the period immediately preceding his presidency seem muted. Without great fanfare, the Church Archives and leaders became more accessible to scholars and the media. Latter-day Saints everywhere loved President Hinckley for his ready wit and wise discourse upon the principles of the gospel. His presidency was an amazing tenure, and we are all beneficiaries of his positive and revelatory stewardship. We will miss him.