



# Go Forward With Faith: The Biography of Gordon B. Hinckley

*Sheri L. Dew*

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"You can always tell when you study the life of a prophet that the Lord has had His hand in his life from the beginning," says Sheri Dew, author of *Go Forward with Faith*. She also wrote the first biography of Ezra Taft Benson.

President Hinckley made his own time available for interviews and feedback and allowed Sheri to interview his family, personal friends, and colleagues, including both of his counselors in the First Presidency and each member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He also made available personal writings, including talks, records, and journals, as well as personal and family photographs.

Sheri Dew has traveled extensively in the process of preparing this biography, including making a trip to the British Isles and Asia for the dedication of the Hong Kong Temple. "Temple work is a passion with him," she says. "He has been involved with the dedication or rededication of forty-three of the forty-eight existing temples. To dedicate a temple in Hong Kong was a dream come true for him, as he has worked for over thirty years with the Saints there."

Elder Neal A. Maxwell has stated that "President Hinckley is helping to lead the Church out of obscurity. . . . He has marvelous gifts of expression that enable him to present our message in a way that appeals to people everywhere." President Hinckley's influence on Church growth has become increasingly apparent in recent years.

When Elder Gordon B. Hinckley first visited Asia in 1960, the Church had only two missions serving that vast continent. Tiny branches of Saints, a dozen here, twenty there, met in members' living rooms and rented halls. There were no stakes. But his optimistic nature filled him with a vision of the potential for spreading the gospel in this area of the world. Indeed, in the Philippines, where there was only one native member of the Church at the time, he expressed to a group of Latter-day Saint servicemen his view that "missionary work will be done in the Philippines in the future and that it will be as fruitful as it has been in many other places in the world."

Thirty-six years later, President Hinckley made his first trip to Asia as President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The picture had changed dramatically, as evidenced by what awaited him in the Philippines: "By midafternoon on May 29, 1996, the Araneta Coliseum, where an evening fireside was to be held, was filled beyond capacity. Lines had begun to form at 7:00 A.M. for a meeting that wasn't scheduled to begin for twelve hours. The official count later indicated that at least 35,000 members had crowded into the coliseum's 25,000 seats. Many Saints had traveled twenty hours by boat and bus to reach Manila. . . .

"When word reached President Hinckley that the coliseum was full and that the building manager wondered if there was any way they could begin the meeting early, he immediately said 'Let's go.' As he and Sister Hinckley entered the vast arena to find it packed with what was believed to be the largest audience in an indoor facility ever to hear a President of the Church in person, the congregation spontaneously rose to their feet, applauded, and then began singing an emotional rendition of 'We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet.'"

"He is a wonderful human being, and he happens to be a wonderful human being whom the Lord has tutored, and trained, and refined, and molded for this day," testifies Sheri Dew.

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