

= Thomas S. Monson =

Thomas Spencer Monson (born August 21 , 1927) is an American religious leader , author , and the sixteenth and current President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter @-@ day Saints (LDS Church) . As president , Monson is considered by adherents of the religion to be a " prophet , seer , and revelator . " A printer by trade , Monson has spent most of his life engaged in various church leadership positions and in public service .

Monson was ordained an LDS apostle at age 36 , served in the First Presidency under three church presidents and was the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles from March 12 , 1995 until he became President of the Church on February 3 , 2008 . He succeeded Gordon B. Hinckley as church president .

Monson has received four honorary doctorate degrees , as well as the Boy Scouts of America 's Silver Buffalo and the World Organization of the Scout Movement 's Bronze Wolf ? both awards the highest given in each organization . Monson is a member of the National Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America , the organization 's governing body .

Monson is chairman of the Boards of Trustees / Education of the Church Educational System , and was appointed by Ronald Reagan to the U.S. President 's Task Force for Private Sector Initiatives . Monson married Frances Beverly Johnson Monson in the Salt Lake Temple in 1948 and they are the parents of three children . Frances Monson died on May 17 , 2013 .

= = Biography = =

Monson was born on August 21 , 1927 , in Salt Lake City , Utah to G. Spencer Monson (1901 ? 1979) and Gladys Condie Monson (1902 ? 1973) . The second of six children , he grew up in a " tight @-@ knit " family ? many of his mother 's relatives living on the same street and the extended family frequently going on trips together . The family 's neighborhood included several residents of Mexican descent , an environment in which he says he developed a love for the Mexican people and culture . Monson often spent weekends with relatives on their farms in Granger (now part of West Valley City) , and as a teenager , he took a job at the printing business that his father managed .

From 1940 to 1944 , Monson attended West High School in Salt Lake City . In the fall of 1944 , he enrolled at the University of Utah . Around this time he met his future wife , Frances , whose family came from a higher social class on the east side of the city . Her father , Franz Johnson , felt an immediate connection because Monson 's great uncle had baptized him into the LDS Church in Sweden .

In 1945 , Monson joined the United States Naval Reserve and anticipated participating in World War II in the Pacific theater . He was sent to San Diego , California , for training , but was not moved overseas before the end of the war . His tour of duty lasted six months beyond the end of the war , and after it was completed he returned to the University of Utah . Monson graduated cum laude in 1948 with a bachelor 's degree in business management . Monson did not serve a full @-@ time mission as a youth . At age 21 , on October 7 , 1948 , he married Frances Beverly Johnson in the Salt Lake Temple . The couple eventually had three children : Thomas Lee , Ann Frances , and Clark Spencer . His wife died on May 17 , 2013 .

After college he rejoined the Naval Reserve with the aim of becoming an officer . Shortly after receiving his commission acceptance letter , his ward bishop asked him to serve as a counselor in the bishopric . Time conflicts with bishopric meetings would have made serving in the Navy impossible . After discussing the matter with church apostle Harold B. Lee (his former stake president) , Monson declined the commission and applied for a discharge . The Navy granted his discharge in the last group processed before the Korean War . Lee set him apart six months later as a bishop ? mentioning in the blessing that he likely would not have been called if he had accepted the commission .

Monson taught for a time at the University of Utah , then began a career in publishing . His first job was with the Deseret News , where he became an advertising executive . He joined the advertising

operations of the Newspaper Agency Corporation when it was formed in 1952 . Monson later transferred to the Deseret News Press , beginning as sales manager and eventually becoming general manager . While with Deseret News Press , Monson worked to publish LeGrand Richards 's A Marvelous Work And A Wonder . He also worked with Gordon B. Hinckley , the LDS Church 's representative on publications , with whom he later served in the First Presidency .

= = = Young adulthood and local church leadership = = =

On May 7 , 1950 , Monson became an LDS bishop at age 22 . He had previously served as ward clerk , ward YMMIA superintendent , and as a counselor in a bishopric . At the time , Monson 's Salt Lake City ward contained over 1 @, @ 000 people , including 85 widows whom he visited regularly . He continued his visits to these widows when he was released after five years of service . He brought them gifts during the Christmas season , including poultry he had raised himself . Monson eventually spoke at the funerals of each of these women . Also during his time as bishop , 23 men from his ward were serving in the United States military in the Korean War . He wrote personal letters to each of these men on a weekly basis . At least one of these men became fully involved with the Church as a result of Monson 's communication .

During the time Monson was bishop of the 6th @-@ 7th Ward sacrament meeting attendance in the ward quadrupled .

In June 1955 , at age 27 , Monson became a counselor to Percy K. Fetzer (later first president of the Berlin Mission) , president of the Salt Lake Temple View Stake . He was replaced as bishop of the 6th @-@ 7th ward the following month . In the stake presidency , Monson oversaw the stake 's Primary , Sunday School , MIA , athletics and budget . He served in the stake presidency until June 1957 , when he moved to Holladay , Utah . In Holladay , Monson became a member of the ward building committee , with the assignment to coordinate ward members ' volunteer service to build a chapel .

In 1959 , Monson became a mission president at age 31 . His youngest child , Clark , was born during the time he was mission president . When he became mission president there were 130 missionaries serving in the mission , with the number of missionaries later peaking at 180 . As mission president , he presided over the church 's Canadian Mission until 1962 , supervising missionaries who were not much younger than he was . The Canadian Mission consisted of Ontario and Quebec ; it was under the leadership of Monson that missionary work began among the French @-@ speaking population of Quebec . Much of the missionary work under his direction was done among immigrants from such places as the Netherlands , Germany , Poland , Italy , the Soviet Union and Hungary . Jacob de Jager , who would later be an LDS general authority , was among the immigrant converts .

In addition to overseeing the missionaries , since there were no local stakes , Monson was also responsible for all operations of the church in the area . When he became mission president , there were 55 church branches , divided into 9 districts , under his direction . When he became president , most districts and branches were presided over by full @-@ time missionaries . Monson changed this to have local members serve as presidents of branches and districts soon after arriving .

As mission president , Monson encouraged members to remain in eastern Canada and work to build up the church there instead of migrating to the centers of the church in Utah or Alberta as many had done in the past . To assist in this effort , to increase the perception of the church and an air of permanence , and to allow better reach to potential members , he initiated a major building program to replace the rented halls most branches met in with permanent structures .

With the organization of a stake in Toronto on August 14 , 1960 much of Monson 's efforts at building the church in Ontario came to fruition . However most of the mission 's area remained in districts and a more complete strengthening of the church in Ontario would not come about until the dedication of the Toronto Ontario Temple in 1990 , which Monson attended as a member of the First Presidency .

Immediately after returning from Canada , Monson was called to serve on the high council of the Valley View Stake in Holladay . Two months later he was made area supervisor over nine stake

missions , which included the Winder , Wilford , Monument Park , Monument Park West , Hillside , Highland , Parleys , Sugarhouse and Wasatch stakes . These stakes were in either Salt Lake City or its east @-@ side suburbs , except for the Wasatch Stake , based in Heber City , Utah . He was also made a member of the Priesthood Genealogy Committee and later the Priesthood Home Teaching Committee .

Upon his return to Utah after his mission to Canada , Monson resumed his work with the Deseret News . He was the assistant general manager of the Deseret News Press , the printing arm of the press mainly doing non @-@ newspaper printing . A month later he was made the general manager of the Deseret News Press . At the time , it was the largest printing plant in the United States , west of the Mississippi River . Monson remained in this position until he was called as an apostle in 1963 , at age 36 .

= = = Apostleship = = =

Monson was sustained a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles at general conference on October 4 , 1963 . He was the youngest man called to the quorum in 53 years and 17 years younger than the next youngest member , Gordon B. Hinckley . He was ordained an apostle and set apart as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve on October 10 , 1963 , by Joseph Fielding Smith .

As an LDS Church apostle , Monson worked in many capacities all around the world . With his business background , he helped oversee many operations of the church , including KSL Newsradio and Bonneville International . He was chairman of the Scripture Publication Committee in the 1970s that oversaw publication of the LDS Church edition of the King James Bible and revised editions of church scriptures containing footnotes and guides . He has also overseen the church 's Printing Advisory , Missionary Executive and General Welfare committees . While an apostle , he continued his education and received a master of business administration degree from Brigham Young University in 1974 . As of 1973 , Monson was one of four members of the church 's Missionary Executive Committee .

From 1965 to 1968 , Monson had the responsibility of overseeing church operations in the South Pacific and Australia . During this time he organized the first LDS stake in Tonga .

Monson also oversaw church operations in Eastern Europe and helped the church gain access to its members in the Soviet bloc . In 1982 , he organized the first stake in East Germany and was instrumental in obtaining permission for the church to build a temple in Freiberg , East Germany , in 1985 .

= = = Positions with for @-@ profit Latter @-@ day Saint businesses = = =

From 1965 until 1996 Monson was a member of the Deseret News Publishing Company board of directors . He was made chairman of the board of directors in 1977 .

= = = Non @-@ Latter @-@ day Saint business positions = = =

Monson also served for several years on the boards of businesses and organizations not owned by the LDS Church . From 1969 to 1988 Monson was on the Mountain Bell Board of Advisors . He served as a member of the board of directors of Commercial Security Bank , and chaired the bank 's audit committee for 20 years . In 1993 when the bank was bought out by Key Bank , Monson was made a member of the Board of Directors of Key Bank . This was one of multiple positions that Monson resigned in 1996 when it was decided that general authorities of the LDS Church should leave all business boards of directors , with the lone exception of the board of Deseret Management Corporation .

= = = Non @-@ Latter @-@ day Saints community leadership positions = = =

In the mid @-@ 1950s Monson was the secretary of the Utah State Roller Club , a group of pigeon

breeders .

Monson was also a member of the National Executive Board of Boy Scouts of America starting in 1969 . From 1971 to 1977 he served on the Utah State Board of Higher Education and the Utah State Board of Regents . From 1981 to 1982 he was a member of the Task Force on Private Sector Initiatives appointed by Ronald Reagan .

= = = First Presidency = = =

Following the death of church president Spencer W. Kimball in 1985 , newly selected church president Ezra Taft Benson asked Hinckley and Monson to serve as his first and second counselors . Monson and Hinckley also served as counselors to Benson 's successor , Howard W. Hunter . When Hinckley succeeded Hunter in 1995 , Monson became his first counselor . He served until Hinckley 's death on January 27 , 2008 . As the second in seniority among the apostles behind Hinckley , Monson simultaneously served as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles ; Boyd K. Packer (then third in seniority behind Hinckley and Monson) served as Acting President during that time .

= = = Church President = = =

Monson became the 16th president of the LDS Church on February 3 , 2008 , succeeding Hinckley , who had died seven days earlier . Monson selected Henry B. Eyring and Dieter F. Uchtdorf as his first and second counselors , respectively . When Monson was born , there were fewer than 650 @, @ 000 members of the church in the world , with most of them being based in the western United States . When he became president , there were over 13 million members worldwide , with the majority of the membership living outside the United States and Canada . As of October 2012 , 31 temples announced by Monson are either under construction or in planning .

Monson and his counselors in the First Presidency met with President George W. Bush on May 29 , 2008 during Bush 's visit to Salt Lake City . He and apostle Dallin H. Oaks met with U.S. President Barack Obama and Senator Harry Reid in the Oval Office on July 20 , 2009 and presented Obama with five volumes of personal family history records .

Monson was notably absent for a meeting other church leaders , including Eyring and Uchtdorf , had with Obama during his visit to Utah in April 2015 . A church spokesperson indicated the absence , given the logistics and timing of the meeting , occurred in order to preserve Monson 's strength for the church 's general conference the upcoming weekend .

= = Legacy = =

= = = Temple dedications = = =

As President of the Church , Monson has dedicated thirteen (and rededicated four) LDS Church temples : the Rexburg Idaho Temple (2008) , Curitiba Brazil Temple (2008) , Panamá City Panamá Temple (2008) , Twin Falls Idaho Temple (2008) , México City México Temple (re @-@ dedication ; 2008) , Draper Utah Temple (2009) , Oquirrh Mountain Utah Temple (2009) , Vancouver British Columbia Temple (2010) , Gila Valley Arizona Temple (2010) , Cebu City Philippines Temple (2010) , Kyiv Ukraine Temple (2010) , Laie Hawaii Temple (rededication ; 2010) , Kansas City Missouri Temple (2012) , Calgary Alberta Temple (2012) , Boise Idaho Temple (rededication ; 2012) , Gilbert Arizona Temple (2014) , and the Ogden Utah Temple (rededication ; 2014) .

As a counselor in the First Presidency , Monson dedicated seven church temples : Buenos Aires Argentina Temple (1986) , Louisville Kentucky Temple (2000) , Reno Nevada Temple (2000) , Tampico México Temple (2000) , Villahermosa México Temple (2000) , Mérida México Temple (2000) , and Veracruz México Temple (2000) . Monson also attended the dedication of many other

church temples as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve and the First Presidency .

= = = Volunteer work = = =

Monson has continued to be active in community and civic affairs . He is past president of the Printing Industry of Utah and a former board member of the Printing Industries of America . A Life Scout and Explorer crew member in his youth , Monson has served in several adult Scouter leadership capacities : merit badge counselor , member of the Canadian LDS Scouting Committee , chaplain at a Canadian Jamboree , and a member of the General Scouting Committee of the LDS Church for ten years . He has been a proponent of the Scouting for Food drive , and since 1969 , he has served on the national executive board of the Boy Scouts of America . He also represented the Boy Scouts of America as a delegate to the World Conferences in Tokyo , Nairobi and Copenhagen .

He served on the Utah State Board of Regents . In December 1981 , U.S. President Ronald Reagan appointed Monson to the President 's Task Force for Private Sector Initiatives . He remained with the initiative until it completed its work in December 1982 .

= = = Political involvement = = =

In June 2008 , Monson and his counselors in the First Presidency sent a letter to local congregations in California , urging them to support Proposition 8 by donating their time and resources , stating that , " Our best efforts are required to preserve the sacred institution of marriage . " In the 2012 Utah voter list he was listed as a registered Republican voter .

= = = Awards and recognition = = =

Monson has received various awards related to his volunteer and educational involvement . In 1966 , Monson was honored as a distinguished alumnus by the University of Utah . His first honorary degree , an Honorary Doctorate of Laws , was conferred upon him in April 1981 by Brigham Young University . Subsequent honorary degrees include a Doctor of Humane Letters from Salt Lake Community College (June 1996) , an Honorary Doctor of Business from the University of Utah (May 2007) , and an honorary doctorate degree in Humanities from Dixie State College (May 2011) .

For his service to Scouting and the community , Monson has received the Boy Scouts of America 's Silver Beaver (1971) and Silver Buffalo (1978) awards , the latter being the highest honor bestowed by the BSA . In 1993 , Monson also received the Bronze Wolf , the highest honor and only award bestowed by the World Organization of the Scout Movement . The citation for this award (conferred at the October 1993 Priesthood Session of the church 's general conference) says , " In his assignments throughout the world as a leader of [the LDS Church] , President Monson has worked tirelessly to bring about the advancement of Scouting in many countries . He has worked closely with the World Organization of the Scout Movement to find ways to strengthen the links between the Church and national Scout associations . He is a committed , solid , hard @-@ working volunteer in the Scout Movement . His Scouting leadership has been exemplary . " In connection with the LDS Church 's centennial celebration as a chartered sponsor , the BSA announced that the Leadership Excellence Complex , located at The Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve in West Virginia , would be renamed the Thomas S. Monson Leadership Excellence Complex and also awarded him Scouting 's Honor Medal (2013) for saving the life of a girl who was drowning when he was 12 years old . The Salt Lake chapter of Rotary International also honored Monson at its international convention with its Worldwide Humanitarian Award .

In Slate.com 's " 80 Over 80 , " a list of the most powerful octogenarians , Monson placed first in 2009 , and was first again in 2010 . In 2011 , Gallup listed Monson as one of " Americans ' 10 Most Admired Men " .

= = Publications = =

Monson has written a number of books , some of which are compilations of speeches given by him , or of quotes . Others discuss particular LDS gospel themes . He also wrote Faith Rewarded which is an autobiographical account about his work in leading the church in Eastern Europe .

Monson , Thomas S. (1973) , Pathways to Perfection , Salt Lake City , Utah : Deseret Book , ISBN 978 @-@ 0 @-@ 87747 @-@ 511 @-@ 8

? ? (1979) , Be Your Best Self , Salt Lake City , Utah : Deseret Book , ISBN 978 @-@ 0 @-@ 87747 @-@ 787 @-@ 7

? ? (1983) , Christmas Gifts , Christmas Blessings , Salt Lake City , Utah : Deseret Book , ISBN 978 @-@ 0 @-@ 87747 @-@ 976 @-@ 5

? ? (1985) , Favorite Quotations from the Collection of Thomas S. Monson , Salt Lake City , Utah : Deseret Book , ISBN 978 @-@ 0 @-@ 87747 @-@ 749 @-@ 5

? ? (1988) , Live the Good Life , Salt Lake City , Utah : Deseret Book , ISBN 978 @-@ 0 @-@ 87579 @-@ 192 @-@ 0

? ? (1992) , The Search for Jesus , Salt Lake City , Utah : Deseret Book , ISBN 978 @-@ 0 @-@ 87579 @-@ 669 @-@ 7

? ? (1994) , Inspiring Experiences That Build Faith : From the Life and Ministry of Thomas S. Monson , Salt Lake City , Utah : Deseret Book , ISBN 978 @-@ 0 @-@ 87579 @-@ 901 @-@ 8

? ? (1996) , Faith Rewarded : A Personal Account of Prophetic Promises to the East German Saints , Salt Lake City , Utah : Deseret Book , ISBN 978 @-@ 1 @-@ 57345 @-@ 186 @-@ 4

? ? (1997) , Invitation to Exaltation , Salt Lake City , Utah : Deseret Book , ISBN 978 @-@ 1 @-@ 57345 @-@ 358 @-@ 5

? ? (1997) , Meeting your Goliath , Salt Lake City , Utah : Deseret Book , ISBN 978 @-@ 1 @-@ 57345 @-@ 357 @-@ 8

? ? (2004) , A Christmas Dress for Ellen , Salt Lake City , Utah : Deseret Book , ISBN 978 @-@ 1 @-@ 59038 @-@ 386 @-@ 5

? ? (2011) , Teachings of Thomas S. Monson , Salt Lake City , Utah : Deseret Book , ISBN 978 @-@ 1 @-@ 60908 @-@ 890 @-@ 3

? ? (2012) , A Prophet 's Voice : Messages from Thomas S. Monson , Salt Lake City , Utah : Deseret Book , ISBN 978 @-@ 1 @-@ 60907 @-@ 218 @-@ 6

= = = Biography = = =

Swinton , Heidi S. (2010) , To The Rescue : The Biography of Thomas S. Monson , Salt Lake City , Utah : Deseret Book , ISBN 978 @-@ 1 @-@ 60641 @-@ 898 @-@ 7