



## **The Leadership of Marion D. Hanks | An Interview with Richard Hanks**

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Kurt Francom:

How's your teaching calling going? Have you ever asked a question during the second hour and suddenly everyone is looking at the carpet in silence? There are proven methods to stimulate class discussion that work like a charm. David Farnsworth does a masterful job presenting on this very subject in the Teaching Saints virtual library. What questions get people talking? How can you effectively listen to the answer they're saying without being distracted of where you want to take the class next? These are crucial principles to consider, especially in this time of Come Follow Me Sunday School. You can watch David Farnsworth's presentation by visiting [leadingsaints.org slash 14](https://leadingsaints.org/14). There, you can gain free access for 14 days to the Teaching Saints virtual library, where you'll find hours and hours of content to help you be a better prepared Sunday teacher. Hey, if you're a newbie to Leading Saints, it's important that you know, what is this Leading Saints thing? Well, Leading Saints is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping Latter-day Saints be better prepared to lead. And the way we do that is through content creation. So we have this phenomenal podcast, we have a newsletter, we have virtual conferences, so much more. And articles on our website, I mean, I could go on and on, right? And we encourage you to jump in, check out Leading Saints, go to the search bar at [leadingsaints.org](https://leadingsaints.org) and type in some topics and see what pops up. We're just glad you're here to join us. Hey, in this episode of Leading Saints, we step into the Leading Saints studio, not this one, but the other one I use with Rich Hanks, who is the author of *To Be a Friend of Christ, The Life of Marion D. Hanks*. Now, if you're older than 50, you probably know who Marion D. Hanks is. I vaguely remember my parents talking about him, but you could say it was like the Elder Holland of General Conference before Elder Holland. Everybody enjoyed, looked forward to his

conference talks. He spoke in conference 50 times. A remarkable life, a remarkable disciple, so many leadership principles, so many behind-the-scenes stories that are worth listening to. Rich is actually the son of Elder Marion D. Hanks. They called him Duff Hanks in his day-to-day life. All his friends and family knew him as Duff. And we just get into some fun stories and draw out some leadership principles. Going to London, England to be the mission president in his 30s as a young general authority and getting some culture back on track here. There were some really unhealthy practices of how baptisms were being handled and Elder Hanks stepped into that and shifted the culture. He was the mission president to Elder Holland and Elder Cook. So his influence continues to go on. The reason we have the symbol of the Christus as our church symbol really is tied into Elder Hanks and some early work he did at Temple Square. So many fun, insightful stories and leadership principles and Rich does a remarkable job sharing the life of his father, which we all got to enjoy, at least the church did in general, for almost 40 years of him being a General Authority 70. And it's a remarkable a remarkable book. I highly recommend it. I read every word and really enjoyed, I really enjoyed my time in that. So one of those, you read the book and you're kind of sad it's over, but let's get into the interview. Here's my interview with Rich Hanks as he talks about the leadership of Elder Marion D. Hanks. Rich Hanks, welcome to the Leading Saints podcast. Thanks for having me, Kurt. Now, we're old friends, right? Can we say that? We used to be in the same ward. I was your ministering brother. I'll go with that. So we're going to count this for this. Did you ever come? I came to your house several times. Come on. Don't don't indict me here. But now we have so much to talk about because we're not talking about you as much as we're talking about your father. So when people ask, who was your dad? What do you say?

Rich Hanks:

He was my dad, you know. I say he was a general authority for 40 years, just about a little bit under. You know, there's not a lot of people that can remember back that far. It's been a while he was made emeritus in 92, so it's that 32 years ago, it's hard to believe. But for his time and age, he was sort of the person that the young people all looked up to. And General Conference would come on, and those few kids who said, yay, would want to listen to dad. And most of the kids would go, oh, no, I'm sure everyone doesn't do that. There's nobody that does that.

Kurt Francom:

But he spoke 50 times, 50 General Conference talks.

Rich Hanks:

He's spoken 50, yeah. And the last few years, they're only speaking every two or three years, right? So, at the beginning, it was, you know, every General Conference. Forty years. What else

is interesting? He was the youngest General Authority, I think, called since Oliver Cowdery. Wow. Pretty sure. 31 years old, right? Yeah. People who don't know what things were like back then, I sometimes say, look, let me just put this in perspective. Gordon B. Hinckley was a paid secretary in the missionary department for five years while my dad was the General Authority. Wow. Just to put the timing in place. One of his first stake conferences as a newly called General Authority was to Howard W. Hunter's stake in Pasadena. So, I mean, basically this is a man who was called very young and then served the Lord really until he went emeritus.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah. And when he was called, there was no emeritus. There wasn't. This is what I'm doing for the rest of my life at 31 years old, right? Yeah. It's kind of a soap.

Rich Hanks:

box of mine, not just for dad, obviously, for our family, but also for the current brethren. I don't think people really understand. There's two things that most people don't really understand about the general authorities and the logistics part of their lives. I would suggest that most of us look forward to a weekend. If I ask you, you know, what do you do on Friday at four? You know, you're thinking weekend. And then usually I'm now approaching, you know, 65. And people are thinking about retirement. So those two words, weekend and retirement, they're gone. I mean, because they're getting on a plane. You look at Elder Holland and these these apostles now and back in my dad's day, it was all of them. There was no emeritus. And their weekends are getting on a plane Friday, getting off a plane Sunday night after having been in Poughkeepsie or Orlando or Boston at a state conference. And then, and as with today's 15 apostles, in your retirement is when you die. Which then changed, right? I mean, my dad had been in for 39 years and all of a sudden this emeritus thing and now he gets to, you know, spend the last years of his life with my mother, which was... And he was a big proponent of the emeritus status, sort of pushing for it. Yeah, I try not to talk to me. I think he actually wrote the paper that caused it. Yeah, I know that was 1976. Yeah, I mean, I put in the book that he was, it had been knocked around for a while, I think the 40s. Hugh Brown talked about it for a while and then eventually President Kimball made the decision and Yay, we got our dad back.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah. Yeah. Because you were born, he was a general authority when you were born, right? He was. All your developmental years were. Yeah.

Rich Hanks:

Yeah, and we try not, there were a lot of positives, right? Yeah, yeah. I mean, we try not to be, I don't think, I have four sisters and we try our best not to be negative about a wonderful thing that happened to us. But having said that, I never went on a camp out with my dad. I never had fathers and sons and I always was there with the ward, but you know, and there are a lot of people that are in that same position. In this particular case, it was caused by him being at a state conference somewhere in the world. Yeah. But like I said, the positives, we were given blessings we didn't deserve and hadn't earned. And we were probably bullied by people, you know, that we hadn't earned or didn't deserve.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah. And I mean, growing up, like, you know, the kids whose dad's a firefighter, they think every kid's dad's a firefighter. Did you feel like every dad was a speaker in general authority?

Rich Hanks:

Well, yeah, no, because That's an interesting question Kurt. I don't think anybody's ever asked me that. So dad would take, I was the only son and so we would go, he would take me to priesthood session of conference even when I was nine and ten. Oh nice. And I'd sit in my mom's seat because she wasn't there because it was a priesthood session. So those folks who are the sons and daughters of other General Authorities, I knew them but we all kind of knew that this is not the normal In fact, I saw one of my friends, Shane Clark, who was Richard Clark, his son, he was at one of the book signings I did last week and we were reminiscing a little bit about those days. But yeah, I never took it as anything but a positive.

Kurt Francom:

There's no doubt from reading the book, he was a very positive influence on your life. And though maybe it was unorthodox, some of the father-son interactions you had, nonetheless, he was definitely there for you and really strong mentorship There.

Rich Hanks:

You know, we didn't do the normal things, but we had some abnormal, no, we had some abnormal things that were interesting. I mean, he was a letter writer. I don't know if everybody was back then, but he would write us all letters from wherever he was. And when I was on my

mission, I had a companion, Tony, who said, this is, or Elder Caputo, who said, this isn't fair. When you read your dad's letters, that counts as scripture study. He's the general authority, right? I thought it was funny. But, you know, I have these beautiful letters in his handwriting and they were personal and they were just terrific. The other kind of interesting thing is he'd take us with him. He'd say, Rich, why don't you come with me and you can come to the state conference in Paraguay, you know, or wherever, Boise. And so, if we could drive, we would drive. I learned how to drive a clutch. in the, I guess the Parowan Steak Saturday afternoon sessions while he was interviewing people, I guess before conferences started and I'm out there burning up his clutch. And he came out and said, well, that's a, that's a great smell, Rich. Did you figure it out? So, yeah, there were unusual, like I said, you're not going to get any complaining out of us, but it was, there were compensatory things, but there were also, you know, you didn't have him around.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah. So, the fascinating thing when I think of Marion D. Hanks that he was like, especially what my father tells me, I mean, so many of us get excited when Elder Holland speaks or, you know, some of these other like, he just had a way with words at the lectern. But just the nuances, the little steps he took throughout his ministry that really still influences today. For example, early morning seminary was something that he sort of put together.

Rich Hanks:

Yeah, in fact, I think one of the most fascinating things that I learned in researching this book was that, and this is kind of almost unbelievable or hard to believe, the church had no formal teaching of the Book of Mormon when he was a seminary teacher.

Kurt Francom:

They just had the book?

Rich Hanks:

No, they would teach the Old Testament, the New Testament, church history. And there was this book called the Book of Mormon, but there was no official, there was, there were no materials. When I say no, I'm sure someone somewhere is going to say, wow, we had some, but just in general for the whole church, it's on the church website. You can go read all about it. And some of it had to do with, I think there were problems, church versus state and some other things

particularly here. Yeah, I mean he would start on 1st Nephi 1 and he would just teach. And it was, it just drew the kids to him. And they even sent, the church education system sent in guys to check on him. to find out what this crazy Hanks is doing and said to his face, the kids will never come if you do it this way. You need to be, you know, teaching the way we've always taught. And he said, well, they're coming. Not only are they coming, but I now have a lot of kids that want to come at six o'clock in the morning, which is unheard of, right? Which is early morning seminar. And he created all of that. Then they, it went so well, they asked him to go to California and he said, no, I can't do that. So he taught early morning seminary and like you said, a lot of what he did and what he was is kind of similar to Elder Holland or others who have an appeal based upon just relatability and that's what he was. He had stories and he had scriptures and he would mold them together.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah. And then a few years ago, President Nelson introduced the church symbol, I think he called it, of the Christus and the arch. And what was the influence your father had on that? Wow.

Rich Hanks:

So, dad goes on a mission. And then at the end of his mission, he's seeing his friends going to war, to World War II. And he's wanting to go do that. And his mission president convinces him to stay through the end. Comes home, goes to war, comes home, meets my mom in Honolulu where she was from on a little R&R. They brought the ship into Pearl Harbor to be outfitted. They met and that's another story if we have time. Comes home, goes to law school, graduates law school. By then he is the assistant director of Temple Square.

Kurt Francom:

And was that like a church calling?

Rich Hanks:

It was both, I think. It was a church calling first and then it became, I think, a paid calling. Okay. And so, there was a presidency of Temple Square. Richard L. Evans was a general authority and was the president of the Temple Square, of Temple Square. And Dad and Bob McKay were the counselors and Dad had been a guide for a long time on Temple Square. So, interestingly enough, they remained in that capacity after they were called as general authorities. So, I'll come back to that. So, Dad and Brother McKay and Elder Evans were this, were dealing all day

every day with the thousands and thousands of people coming to see the Mormons on Temple Square.

Kurt Francom:

And did they have like missionaries like they do today?

Rich Hanks:

They had guides. Okay. There were no missionaries. These are all generally older men and women, mostly men. and who were just doing it. And Russ Nelson, President Nelson now, was one of Dad's guides. Oh, interesting. As was Neil Maxwell and Truman Madsen. And we could go on. Dad had been pitching hard to Elder Evans and to the First Presidency that we needed some sort of way for people to know we were Christians. Because the number one question is, are Mormons Christians? Probably still the number one question, I guess. So anyway, the first presidency was David O. McKay, J. Reuben Clark, and Stephen L. Richards. And J. Reuben Clark was not a fan of iconography. Did I get that right? It's a word, iconography. And so dad would pitch and he'd say no. And then he'd go back, I guess, a year or two later and he'd say no. So in June of 1957, the three of them went in for the big push. Dad convinced Richard L. Evans, we need to pitch hard for the Christus. to our Waldson's Christus to get us a copy and put it here. Now, they just designed with the architects of the church, these two new visitor centers, which by the way, didn't come to fruition for, I guess, seven or eight years. But the theory was, let's get this Christus. People will know we're Christians. They went in, the three of them. Now, just as they're walking into the council room, Richard L. Evans turns to dad and says, how'd you like to go down in history as the man who messed up Temple Square. And with that encouragement, they went and they sat down and they presented the visitor centers and then dad presented the Christus idea. And he wrote, it's in the book, he wrote, before President Clark, J. Reuben Clark, could give his We Don't Believe in Icons speech again, President McKay slapped his knee and said, why not? And then he turned to Stephen L. Richards and said, don't you have a friend that can get us a Christus? So they clearly had been thinking about it, but it just hadn't come to fruition. So, I think it's the rest of my life, we all knew dad got the Christus or at least made the pitch. Yeah, yeah. The actual obtaining of the Christus is too long a story for here, but it finally came about and now we have them in visitor centers all over the world and now it is the symbol of the church. Yeah, that's really cool. That's really cool. I was excited.

Kurt Francom:

And then just the continued influence that he was a mentor to two of our current living apostles. He was their mission president, Elder Holland and Elder Cook.

Rich Hanks:

Yeah, and that's a sweet story. Elder Holland and Elder Cook were missionaries in England, and I don't know if you want to cover England as well.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah, well, part of my question, and you can fit this in, I'm curious because he was called there to be a mission president. He was a general authority. He was called there because it's commonly known as the baseball baptisms were inappropriate Things were happening with getting too many numbers and baptisms, right? So, he was there to clean it up. Is that accurate? Sure.

Rich Hanks:

Yeah. So, it's the end of 1961. Dad's been a general authority for eight years, flying all over the world and doing what they do. He called down to President McKay's office and President McKay said, I need you to go clean up the mess in England. That's a direct quote. We need to fix what's happened there. There were certain apostles and general authorities who didn't believe it was a problem. And so, dad said, well, yes. And was asked, when can you go? He said, right now. So, my sweet mother took these little family of seven of us. How old were you? I was 18 months. Oh, wow. And we moved to London. And his experience there, it was not pleasant. He got called into Prince Philip's buddy who was working across the street from 10 Downington who just beat him up to the point where dad, I put this in the book, he just said, look, I just got here. And he looked him right in the eye and said, I can promise you this will not happen again.

Kurt Francom:

Because he was frustrated that

Rich Hanks:

Well, I grabbed a whole bunch of newspaper clippings and put them on one page in the book, but there are hundreds and hundreds.



Kurt Francom:

These are not positive. The church had a bad name for their practices.

Rich Hanks:

In fact, one of his quotes, they were going to kick us out of the country. Wow.

Kurt Francom:

And essentially, missionaries were just saying whatever it took to young people to...

Rich Hanks:

Yeah, I try not to talk about the negatives of the thing, but basically it was a really big blight. And it's happened in a few other missions over the years. And it's usually an overzealous mission president who becomes focused on numbers. And that's clearly what happened in England in the early 60s. The numbers were more important than the people. And no one would say that, but that's how it became. That was the culture of it. In that context, he spent a lot of time fixing each of the major issues and that's what I was trying to find. I wrote down what I thought was kind of interesting. I spent a lot of my career doing things on change management, which is I think applicable I don't know that there was change management back in those days, and I don't know that he thought about it being this sort of precise and structured in his approach, but I did write down all the things I could take out of what he did. So the first thing he did is he talked to every missionary, he interviewed every missionary, he communicated with them and said, the new program is this. By the way, it's the Lord's program. And so we're going to do that going forward. We're going to focus on conversion and activation and not on baptisms. He met with each of the stakeholders, the missionaries, the mission leaders, the stake leaders, the government, and he promised each of them that a change was happening so that they could see there was a sort of a new way of approaching everything. He changed the definitions in England. It's interesting to read all this, but the previous mission president had defined a family as two people in a household, which could be two children. And he made that so that one of the two had to be a parent. He got personally involved. He said I'm going to go to every baptism for the next six months. Wow. And that's what he did. And then he gave them something to replace the old and in his mind that was the Book of Mormon. He had every missionary read the Book of Mormon three times. I love this approach. And so, consequently, I've got all these letters from these missionaries who say things like, you saved our life, you brought integrity into a bad situation.

Kurt Francom:

So... And going back to the Book of Mormon thing, they would read it three times like in six weeks, right? Yes, they were supposed to read it.

Rich Hanks:

I think, well, the first two were supposed to be within six weeks, I believe. And then the third one was things that apply to you. So, that would be your whole life. Yeah. Anyway, that's how he found this love of all these wonderful elders and sisters. And, you know, Elder Holland and Elder Cook were leaders from the beginning. And I talk about each of them. They would, of course, get the lion's share of the attention because they're both apostles now. Yeah. But he had tens of, you know, I don't know how many stake presidents and Relief Society presidents, bishops and And he'd be the first to say that their contribution was no less important. He would often talk about Moroni, who was, you know, this awesome guy in the Book of Mormon. It says that if all of the people were like Moroni, the world would, or Satan would tremble in his boots. And then right after that, it says the other people, the other leaders were no less serviceable. So, in his mind, yes, how great is it that two of them became apostles? I'm not, it's just wonderful. I mean, it's a great thing, a legacy for him. But so were so many others. And I think that comes from, well, his just get along nature and his desire to be a part of their lives even after they came home. Yeah.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah, that's awesome. And then the interesting, just being a general authority for so long, a prominent one, an influential one, but never becoming an apostle. And you shared moments in the book where people would come to him and say, well, obviously you're the next one or whatever. Because even from when President Monson was called, I mean, it wouldn't have shocked anyone if, you know, Elder Hanks was called at that point either, you know, up until even President Nelson was called, right? So, But I think that's an interesting leadership dynamic of just this feeling of, well, I'm doing this. Obviously, maybe the next step is there. Not that he thought that way, but the culture thought that way. Like when is Elder Hanks going to be the apostle?

Rich Hanks:

You know what? I just hit this straight on. I mean, I could not, I could have left a chapter out on that, but it's just such an obvious thing. Yeah. And as a little boy, I remember walking down the street and people, some apostle had just died and they would just come up and they'd say, you, you're next. I just know it. And that went on and on for 40 years.

Kurt Francom:

And how did he handle that generally?

Rich Hanks:

I mean, I can tell you what he said externally. My favorite one, the first year he said, first years, he would be very serious and he would say, one serves where one is called. In the last years, he was a little more cynical and people would say, well, why are you not an apostle? And he'd say, because God knows me and loves me. And there's a humor in that, but it's actually pretty apropos. He was not a, he expressed his views openly. He wasn't in rebellion, in my opinion, but he also felt it important to tell why he believed certain things. And I can explain that. Let me finish this train of thought first. When he was a temple president of the Salt Lake Temple, he had one of, this is a great explanation, one of his counselors got called as a temple president somewhere else. So he needed a new temple president. And the day he announced that, one of the people who thought he would be his new counselor came in and was not happy. And dad wrote, well, I don't, I'm not sure why he would be upset. I've been passed over more than the children of Israel. And I have trained singularly more apostles than any living person on the earth." And he had. And I don't know, you know, he never... I never heard him complain, but... Yeah, it wasn't an ego thing. No, people come in here... Richard Scott, Richard G. Scott is driving around. He's the executive secretary of the Washington, D.C. stake. Fast forward 15 years. He's an apostle and dad's still in the 70s. I mean, he just didn't, to him the titles didn't matter. In fact, he acted as if he were an apostle in most cases and it didn't. And I should also add that this concept of apostles, although it's been around forever, it was different back in the 40s and 50s and 60s. There were 33 general authorities and they were all treated equally. Today, things like, yeah, well today there's hundreds and hundreds and now we just say these 12 are the sort of the focus, but it wasn't like that back then. And so, yeah, I think that he just chose to be a leader and follow what the Lord was telling him in his mind. And if you want, I can tell you why that was, that story. So, he comes home from England. He's just had this brutal experience changing And there were more things I didn't really share earlier, but let's just say that even though President McKay handpicked him to go and fix this problem in England, there were others in the first presidency and in the quorum of the 12th specifically who didn't like the declining numbers because the numbers went skyrocketing and then overthrew and then back down. He had the missionaries baptizing families and holding on and getting priesthood leadership and all the things that you would hope. That didn't sit well with some of the brethren who had been pushing the numbers. So, he has this problem where he is sent to England by the prophet and then basically second-guessed or taken shots at by others of the general authorities. Brutal. Yeah. Hard. He comes home after two and a half years. President McKay unilaterally invites him down to his office and gives him a blessing without Duffer, that dad requesting it. And what he said in the blessing was, let your voice be heard, even if it's in opposition to the status quo or what others think should be happening. And those were almost

the identical words of his patriarchal blessing. So, he took that to heart and that's how he acted. Yeah. And sometimes diplomatically and sometimes not diplomatically.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah, right. And that was intriguing me throughout the book is this and again, I'd love to get into this and of course, we respect all former and current general authorities we love and we know their men and doing their best and But it's so intriguing to me because on the local church level, leaders deal with this too, when maybe in the council setting, there's some tension there. I don't want to embarrass this person, but I want to make sure I push back on this or that idea. And so there were some figures like him and Bruce R. McConaughey, were they called the 70s the same day?

Rich Hanks:

No, Bruce Harman Conkey had been a Seventy for, I can't remember, maybe five or six years. And then they were together for 17, 18 years. Yeah.

Kurt Francom:

But good friends, but nonetheless, oftentimes on different sides of maybe an argument or orthodoxy, would you say? How would you articulate some of those?

Rich Hanks:

You know, I don't know how to, I've been thinking about this. I'm not exactly sure how to apply that to a Bishop's Council or a State Presidency or a Mission Presidency Council. Because in this particular case, you had someone who, who I guess, I don't want to put words in his mouth, but must have believed that he had some authority to do what he did.

Kurt Francom:

And... Is he your faTher?

Rich Hanks::

No, no. This is Bruce McConkie.

Kurt Francom:

Oh, gotcha. Okay.

Rich Hanks:

He would make forceful pronouncements that, I mean forceful, tough words. He gave a talk at BYU called the seven deadly heresies that, I can't remember the word, but he said anybody who believes these seven things is I think an idiot or I don't want to get in trouble with the exact wording, but it wasn't pleasant. I was on my mission when that talk came out and communicated with my father and said, well I believe three of the seven, am I going to hell? And he said, no, I believe those same three, Rich, and I just came from Spencer Kimball's office, Crawford's office, where we discussed it, following me having spoken with Bruce. You know, I was a kid during most of that, but the real truth of the matter is, is that Elder McConkie somehow didn't read Doctrine and Covenants 28, which is really clear. There's one prophet on the earth, it's Joseph Smith, and when he's finished, there'll be another prophet to take his place. The 15 brother and the 15 men are prophets, seers, and revelators, but they don't act. That's in abeyance. There's only one who speaks for the church, and that's the prophet. So you can see my dad coming out of me here now as I've researched this book all these years. So, when his dear friend, he actually, when he sat with me for his funeral planning, this is years before he died, he said, I want Bruce to speak. They were dear friends. They respected each other. They were both really smart. They were both very well versed in the scriptures. Inside and out. Somehow Elder McConkie felt that he could say these things definitively when in fact the church has still never said if there was evolution or not. The church has still never said if there's progression between kingdoms after this life. He even went down I think a couple of months or a year later to BYU, gave a talk on why we don't worship Christ. And dad just said, this is silly. The Book of Mormon is full of times we worship Christ and Bruce, your own song says, we'll worship him with all. So, you know, I can't talk about that, it's none of my business, but I can tell what dad did and that was dogmatic assertions do not take the place of revelation. And that was by Charles Penrose who was a leader. So you know Mormon doctrine, they finally stopped publishing that and I guess somehow Elder McConkie and others have felt that they could deliver revelation for the church and contrary to Doctrine and Covenants 28 which is very clear. So dad took it upon himself I guess to let his voice be heard and I'm not exactly sure how you would apply that in a

Kurt Francom:

Well, I think it's helpful just to see, you know, the church and most people maybe aren't familiar with how the correlation department works, but you can kind of see the importance of that, that,

you know, 70s aren't allowed to just go write a book like they could back then, you know. Elder McConkie, you know, writes Mormon doctrine just sort of there and suddenly they're attracting and, you know, and then some of these talks, right, of let's come together, let's maybe check, make sure we're on the same page.

Rich Hanks:

Yeah, the certain leaders in the church and even maybe even today like to make a big deal about the unanimity of the Quorum of the Twelve. Well, that's just silly. If they're unanimous all the time going into a meeting. Right. That makes me worried. Right. I mean, these are 12 men from 12 different walks of life. I hope they come into the meetings and you know, have great disagreements. Now, when they come out of the meeting, different story. I mean, I'll be there right there with my stake president if I'm on the high council and he, I will be right there. But going in, I mean, the question is, are you asking or are you telling? If you're telling me to go on my way to Missouri right now, if the prophet says, you're not going to see me, I'm going to be walking to Missouri. But if you're asking, Yeah, this isn't a good time for us to go to Missouri right now. I mean, do you know what I mean? Yeah. Somehow we confuse obedience and belief systems that makes us so we're not allowed to speak the truth or at least speak our minds. And I can't remember who it was that said all is necessary for evil to triumph is for enough good men to do nothing. to sit around. And boy, that was not him. Right. Again, I don't think he looked for, I think he was trying to be, you know, cohesive with his brethren, but, and he could be disagreeable. He could, but he would prefer, I think he would prefer to disagree without being disagreeable.

Kurt Francom:

And that's one thing, like as far as leadership principles go that I took from observing his life through the book is that it's not like he was some renegade that was pushing against the orthodoxy and demanding change or, but he would be willing, like, you know, going back to that blessing, his voice would be heard. And there's, that's completely appropriate for the calling he held, the authority he had.

Rich Hanks:

Well, and plus it's human nature. This is the fifth or sixth podcast I've done on this subject. And it's just human nature to move in and focus in on the things that are different. When he was letting his voice be heard, I think 95% of the time it was to testify of Jesus. It was to pitch a new program. It was to forcefully, I guess in some ways, present his opinion about what he thought was right, but it wasn't always negative. Now, there were some areas where his desire to let his voice be heard, I think probably became a broken record to a few of the prophets over the time.

For example, he just did not believe that Matthew 28 was more important than Matthew 25. So, to refresh anybody's memory, Matthew 28 is go ye into all the world, baptizing and teaching them to observe whatsoever I've commanded. Matthew 25 is the goats and the sheep, and you don't go to the hospitals and the prisons and the poor, and you're not getting into heaven. That's a paraphrase. And so, the church, just by definition, pushes hard on Matthew 28, proselyting, right? Baptizing. But he didn't see any reason that that should be more important than Matthew 25. Service. And now, 60 years later, we're doing all those things. We have, the church has humanitarian departments and none of that was happening. It was all just sending missionaries out to... Yeah, and I don't mean to, he was never alone. Well, in some things he was. But he was always pushing hard for the church. Let's be humanitarian, the institutional humanitarianism of the church. And he'd use tough examples in meetings. He got sent to become the area president in Hong Kong for all of Southeast Asia. One of the first things he did was handpick sisters out of each mission, put them all together and then put them into refugee camps in the Philippines and Thailand and Hong Kong. The church had had zero activity in anything like that. In fact, he was walking along the road with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and this guy says, we're not letting Mormons in here. You people are self-absorbed. You didn't do anything for anybody. So he had to promise him, he said, look, you look at me, I will give you my home number. I will fly here in a moment's notice from Hong Kong. I will promise you there will be no proselyting. We will do what Jesus taught us to do. Now that's all well and good. Now he goes back to Salt Lake and pitches for the money. I mean, you have to have money to do anything. And one of the brethren who will remain unnamed said, how many baptisms is this going to cost us? Now, just put that in perspective. How do you answer that question? What would you say? I'm not trying to put you on the spot. I mean, you know what he said? What's that? All of them. So he's sitting with a committee of his peers or in some case, maybe is one of his bosses on the committee. And he says, all of them, we're going to do this because this is what Jesus said to do in Matthew 25. No baptisms. We are not going to wear our name tags. The sisters will wear a name tag, but we're not going to do it now. He pushed that every year. And over and over and over again. And I, you know, in a church that at that time was just, and to this day is still pushing baptisms, baptism. He compromised, they compromised to have the missionaries do six hours a week. And then it moved up to 10 hours a week. If he'd had his way, it would have been a hundred hours a week. It would have been, well, let me give you an example. I put this in the book, I think. If you ask a hundred people, what's a Mormon? Let's say we go to Times Square, Manhattan, and we say, what's a Mormon? And what do you think you'd get?

Kurt Francom:

either a polygamist or now they've seen the Book of Mormon musical. So, you know.

Rich Hanks:

Polygamy, Book of Mormon musical, one of these horrible HBO specials on sister wives or whatever, I don't know. Guys in white shirts, you know, knocking on my door, whatever. Yeah. Donny Osmond, I don't know. Yeah. Wouldn't it be great if in 30 years, if you got a hundred people in the street in Times Square and they said Mormons, Oh, LDS, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Those are the people that helped me rake my leaves and empty out my U-Haul, donated blood. I mean, what if we were the Church of Jesus Christ that did not only what Jesus Christ said, but what Jesus Christ did, which is easily seen in Matthew 25 and many other places. Everybody I say that to nods their head, that'd be awesome. And then I ask, which of those two methods would result in the most baptisms over a 50-year period? Because clearly the baptisms will fall. Yeah. Right? But over time, for a while, they would explode. Over time, one might argue. Yeah. that the demonstration of Christ-like attributes in our lives with 70 or 80,000 missionaries would physically result in more baptism. Can't prove it, have no way of knowing. All I know is that he did experiment after experiment in different parts of the world where he was in charge. And to him, they were all successful. I believe they're all successful. I don't have the numbers that prove that. But even if there are no numbers, isn't that what Jesus taught?

Kurt Francom:

That's huge. And that's really made me think as I was reading those chapters, just thinking about my own experience, you know, in Utah and running wards and church leaders that we sometimes become insular, right? We want to, we take the meals to the people having babies in our ward or we help the people in our ward move, but sometimes they don't take those few extra steps to look more at the community. You know, what does the community need or the art? general area, if service and helping the homeless or these things, we kind of see, well, that's that's the government's issue. Or, you know, we're just focusing on maybe doing the church thing, making sure everybody's got callings and we're teaching the gospel, but just maybe be more self-reflective. How can I be more intentional There?

Rich Hanks:

I told you on the phone, you're going to get a little bit of starry-eyed sun here. I do my best to be objective, but this was another one of his deals. I mean, we didn't know what to put on his tombstone, his grave.

Kurt Francom:

A man who gave 50 general conference talks and hundreds of thousands of times.



Rich Hanks:

So what do you put? Well, we didn't put a picture of the temple. We put a picture of the scriptures. Nothing wrong with the temple. Right. And these words, serve others, whatever their faith, wherever they are. That is the anti-insular.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah.

Rich Hanks:

So a couple of fun stories, interesting stories. He's a brand new General Authorities. I don't know how old he was. He was probably 33, 34. And he's on the board of directors of the Salvation Army, the YMCA, the community chest. He ends up 30 years later, 25 years later, being on his way to being president of Rotary International. He was the non-insular General Authority. And this was at a time when no one else was.

Kurt Francom:

Hmm. So it's not like the church said, hey, will you go do that? Oh, he just no.

Rich Hanks:

In fact, he got a little bit beat up for it. And it's not like they took away some of his state conferences. I mean, he'd have to get on red ice to get back to some of these meetings. He was on the president's council, physical fitness and sports for five U.S. presidents. That's a lot of trips to Washington, D.C. There was no zoom. Right. So you're getting on airplanes. So, here's a couple of fun stories. It's the middle of the decade of the 50s. He goes into the first presidency and he says, can I have \$25,000, a lot of money back then, to help with Salvation Army. I'm on the board of Salvation Army and J. Reuben Clark says, Isn't that another church? And my dad says, no, President Clark, I'm a member of your church. But we need the money because they're taking care of the homeless in our city. This is Salt Lake City and the Mormons are doing So President Clark says, well, let them take care of their own. And my dad said, President Clark, they are our own. This is our city. Fast forward, dad is the chairman of the Deseret Gym. Those of you who don't know what the Deseret Gym was, before there was the conference center, the church would build gyms. We had a big, beautiful gym there called the Deseret Gym for all the athletics and weightlifting. racquetball and so forth. And he became the chairman because he

was quite an athlete, which I talked about elsewhere and in the book. So on Saturdays, once in a while, he'd be home on a Saturday, almost never, but once in a while he'd say, Hey Rich, let's go play squash. And so here's the chairman of the desert gym and we're playing squash. Where do we go? To the YMCA. And I'd say, Dad, what are we doing here? I like the spittoons, but other than that, why are we here? And he'd say, because these are my friends and I want them to know. It shouldn't be Mormons at Desert Gym, non-Mormons at YMCA. He did it on purpose. Wally's the chairman. And I got, I don't even know, 50 stories that are similar to that. Here's another great one. He's in the Rotary Club and he and the top Jew in the Rotary Club, so you got one of the top Mormon in the Rotary Club and the top Jew and they're standing outside of ZCMI, which is a downtown mall that doesn't exist anymore. In three hours of ringing the Salvation Army bell, they raised more money than all the rest of the bells in the entire month of December all over Utah. And that's because these top businessmen who happened to be a Jew and this top religious leader who happened to be a Mormon would just say, hey, Bob, 100. Tom, 100. And they just raised all this money. That's cool. I don't think another general authority rang the bell. Again, I told you a little story, I'd hear a son, but he was so unique. Yeah. Such a great example. He was really unique and it didn't matter. It wasn't Mormons in and everybody else out. That's a whole nother question bell. I'll wait and see if he asks that one.

Kurt Francom:

So, I'm curious, just from your experience being a mission president, that was five, six, seven years ago that you're a mission president?

Rich Hanks:

We've been home eight years.

Kurt Francom:

How did, like, as you found yourself in these similar roles as being a leader, what parts of him came out through your leadership?

Rich Hanks:

So, I had called with my wife to be the mission president in Alabama. And of course, I immediately thought, what would dad do here? And I had been saving materials from his mission presidency. And from all the years of going and doing mission tours and speaking at all of the hundreds of, seems like thousands of meetings on missionary work. And so I thought

about that. I wrote down a few that I wanted to do and I hope I did them well. I think Liz and I did them well, but that will, time will tell. We focused on the missionaries, not on the baptisms. I bet if you ask 50 random members of the church who's in charge of baptisms, they'd get it wrong. It's actually the stake presidents. Mission presidents are supposed to be in charge of missionaries, interestingly. Yeah. Unless that's changed in the last eight years. I think you're so accurate. So, I did that. I focused on the missionaries, not at the expense of baptisms. That's why we were there. But I wanted the missionaries to know that I love them. Dad was not never a catcher. And so, I determined right up front, I'm not going to be a catcher. I'm not going to try and catch my missionaries doing something wrong. I'm not going to try and catch them in too late or in too early or I'm not going to try and catch them listening to the wrong music. I decided I'd do what he did which is I'm going to treat these young people as if they are adults because they are adults. I've been to missions that had 23 pages of rules. We had one rule in my mission other than the white handbook and preach my gospel. The ones that are standard, we had one rule and it was there will be no U-turns in my mission and that's because I almost lost a sister. So, a U-turn?

Kurt Francom:

Doing a U-turn.

Rich Hanks:

Like a literal U-turn.

SPEAKER\_00:

Literally in their car a U-turn.

Rich Hanks:

That was it. That's my only extra rule. And you've got, you've literally got some missions that literally have hundreds of, you know, or I don't know, hundreds, but tens of rules. I decided that on the first night they arrived, I was going to tell them that I was going to treat them like adults and that I wasn't going to try and catch them. I'm not going to send the assistants in to catch you. You're an adult, you're on a mission, behave like one. We pushed hard on service in our mission. I just talked about a minute ago, I wanted the missionaries to not just be knocking on doors all day, but to serve people. I would tell the sisters their first night in the mission home, they're all exhausted, they've come from the MTC and I would say those are beautiful dresses

and all those hems are going to be ruined. And the reason they're going to be ruined is because you're going to rake leaves and ride bikes and rake leaves and ride bikes and rake leaves. And elders, your pant legs are going to become dirty because you're going to empty U-Hauls and you're going to serve your fellow beings. We also emphasized work. All of our missionaries, every day we would have them recite the D&C chapter or D&C section four. And then we would also have them recite a poem, which is the same poem. that Elder Cook and Elder Holland, I think both recited in their various talks over the years. And that poem is by Ella Wheeler Wilcox. There is no chance, no destiny, no fate can circumvent or hinder or control the firm resolve of a determined soul. And, you know, missionaries are in a tough spot. This is a brutal thing. Those of you who haven't been on missions, it's not easy. And I wanted them to know that if they resolved to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, that they could do it. We stay in touch with our missionaries. They don't run from each other. They see somebody across campus, they run towards them, I hope. That's what I've been told. They don't run away from them. And that's, I think, what Dad would have done. So, I tried to follow those same things.

Kurt Francom:

That's awesome. That's really inspiring. Anything else come to mind as far as your time as a missionary? Does that sum it up?

Rich Hanks:

Yeah. Some things have never changed. I was told by a general authority visiting that my missionaries were doing too much service. And in a fit of cynicism and stupidity, I responded, really? Did you want me to quote you on that? Can you really do too much service on this planet? I'm pretty sure that's what the Savior, and that was stupid of me, bad.

Kurt Francom:

But how do you handle that?

Rich Hanks:

Yeah, I don't know, because that's just, I just don't get it. How can you do too much service? I'm proud of my wife, and I think she was phenomenal, and we went out when the surge happened. She and I did. I'm not here to talk about me, but it was amazing. You know, I had 12 mission, 12 sisters on my mission in Scotland as a young man. We had 150 at one time. I had 300

missionaries and half were sisters. So we were equally yoked, my wife and I, in serving these young people and tried to follow the same things I think that dad would have done.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah. On that note, like I want to talk about your dad's wife, your mother, Maxine. Sure. So I'm just curious, like if we were to bring her here in the eternal scope of things and she was to address like the wives of leaders, like what advice would she have for bishops wives or mission president wives or elders quorum wives?

Rich Hanks:

Oh, that's a good one. Service. I think she would follow dad and they were equally yoked in that. Support. She was no shrinking violet. I mean, she was a force and you know, she taught school and she could have been all kinds of different things. She chose to be a wife and a mother and she chose to support my dad. I mean, she was Totally supportive. I mean, you think about this. She's taking him to the airport every Friday, picking him up on Sunday, taking his suit off and hanging it up outside to air off all the cigarette smoke that he's been sucking in for five hours on his flight from wherever. Such a different thing. She's got all these little people, five of us little kids, no father helping her or no husband helping her out. Even during the week he was counseling other people. She was graceful and determined and she was supportive and she was really just unbelievable. He would say, I put this in the book, she raised the kids. Just think about, I'll just tell one quick story, this will just maybe help some people see what this was like. He spoke at the general conference opening session, there were three sessions, three days back then, Friday opening session and he gave a prayer and he was 31 years old and the assistant director at Temple Square. And he was working for Richard L. Evans, who was a general authority in the 70. Dad was not. Gets a call from David O. McKay on Sunday morning at 7 a.m. So, three hours before conference is going to start. President McKay says, this is David O. McKay, I'd like you to come down to my office right now. My dad's like, who is this really? True story. Goes down, President McKay says, the Lord has spoken. You are to be a general authority and take Richard L. Evans' place in this council, First Council of the Seventy. He's going to be an apostle.

Kurt Francom:

Wow.

Rich Hanks:

There's a whole story there. Dad knew it was going to happen. He'd had a spiritual prompting. He didn't believe it. He's 31. How could this happen to me? Yeah. Here's the point with my mom. He goes to the Hotel Utah. He calls up and he says, Maxine, I need you to come down here for the 10 o'clock session. I'm taking Richard L. Evans' place and then he had to hang up and go on. She's scratching her head saying, okay, so Richard L. Evans isn't going to be the director of Temple Square anymore, so Duff's going to be the director of Temple Square. Yeah. Can you imagine when she shows up at the tabernacle and she's 27, two little girls, and her whole life was put on hold, every dream, hope that involved what they were going to be and do. Now it's put on hold and your husband's going to be a general authority till he dies. And you're never going to see him on weekends and so forth. And so I pay homage to my mom. I mean, she didn't balk. She just dug in and she was a terrific mom. She was, she didn't like necessarily all the fancy party type things. It wasn't her way, but she lived the life that she could in support of him and her testimony of Jesus Christ.

Kurt Francom:

I love it. Love it. As we wrap up here, like I want to make sure is some broader topics like just his approach to teaching or speaking that we haven't mentioned, like to to speak that many times. What did you or others learn about how to give a talk?

Rich Hanks:

Yeah, he was constantly, constantly reading. I mean, more than anyone I ever knew and marking. Going through his materials, you know, so he died and I've been researching for the book and finding hundreds and hundreds, thousands of his own talks that he then marked up as if he was just reading it. I think he was going like, Oh, I could, Oh, I should have done this better. Yeah. Yeah. And marking every year he would read, I don't want to make this sound like an annual thing cause it wasn't necessarily 12 months. It might've been nine months. Might've been, he would read the Book of Mormon and he would mark the daylights out of that thing. I mean he, his Book of Mormon, all colors and lines and circles and notes to himself and then he'd finish and give it away and start over again. Wow. People come up to me lately, but for years and years, and say, I have your dad's Book of Mormon. I'd say, no, you have one of my dad's Book of Mormon. And they'd say, would you like it back? And I'd say, no, you can keep it. I've got several. Yeah. He just was a voracious reader and marker. And he would thresh and digest, he would say. When he spoke, he was always over-prepared. Always. I mean, he would stand up at BYU and say, well, I got enough material here for a couple days, anybody want it? And sometimes he'd throw it all away and do a completely different talk. But he had so much stuff. One of my favorite quotes is, the Holy Ghost will never elicit thoughts out of an empty head. His brain was full all the time. Poetry, made for some pretty long car rides when we were kids, he would be helping us memorize. I mean, you just choose something, we look at something beautiful and what comes into my mind is, enraptured by this glorious scene, I gaze

in meditation like one lost in some sweet dream, amazed at God's creation. Well, I only know that poem because he had us memorize that poem looking at the Grand Canyon or wherever. And that's what he did. So, his preparation involved pleading with the Lord for help. And then doing the necessary work. And then he just had a way of presenting. He was humorous. I put a whole chapter on humor. I think my publisher wanted me to take it out. And I thought, no. No, I'm leaving in his best jokes. Yeah. He also rarely, I always feel a little bit ashamed by this, he rarely ever did something twice. Once in a while. But he had stories he would tell. But he would always prepare from scratch. There was none of this, oh, I gave a talk once. Every talk was from scratch. Again, it might repeat a story, but I'd like to address one thing that he loved to do when he taught. He loved 1 Nephi 19, 22. It talks about why we should read scripture and the three reasons given are to know of what happened to other people, to increase our belief in the Redeemer, and then the most important one, not most important, but the one for my conversation here is to learn things that would apply to me. I try to do that as I am teaching my gospel doctrine class here. I was trying to think of, well, how would dad teach this? Let me give you a perfect example. First Nephi 1.1. You don't happen to know what that is, do you? Sure, yeah. I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat. Well, if I'm teaching that, in the way most people, that would be a presentation of information. Nephi was born of goodly parents. You know, we just go through the different things. It's not how he ever taught that. He taught that, what if you weren't born with goodly parents? What if your parents were horrible? How does that scripture apply to you? I, Kurt, who will someday be a goodly parent. See, that changes the whole thing. And so that's how he taught. That's how you spoke. How will this be beneficial? Not in the abstract, but in the specific. Goodly parents. Another quick one. Lehi starts to complain. Nephi breaks his bow. Lehi's complaining. We don't have any food. Where are we going to go? And even Lehi starts to murmur. And it says, Nephi went and asked his father, whither shall we go to obtain food? Well, how do we apply that? Well, we apply that in sometimes old men and women, our mentors, need to feel some encouragement, some support. And so this young prophet, Nephi, the old guy's washed up. Lehi's washed up, right? Goes and gives his father back dignity. Didn't need to ask him where to go to. I'm sure God had told Nephi where to go to get food. I don't know if these are resonating with you, but these were the kinds of things that he wanted to teach. This is what he taught his missionaries. This is what he taught for 40 years. How can we apply the Savior and what the Savior has taught us and what the scriptures teach us to our lives? How can we change our daily life?

Kurt Francom:

Yeah. What about just the concept of the leaders deal with repentance, you know, helping somebody through repentance?

Rich Hanks:

Yeah, that's a poof. You asked in the preparation for this if I had a favorite general conference talk, which is impossible because there are 50 and another 150 at BYU and another 10,000. But what I wrote down, I wrote down six because I couldn't think of one, but one of them is my specialty is mercy. He gave a great talk on that. And the reason I love that is because that was him. He just didn't understand the concept of punishment as being a part of repentance. Yeah. And he would say, okay, lost coin, lost sheep, prodigal son, woman taken in adultery. I mean, the woman taken in adultery was taken in adultery and she's right there and he's bent over, you know, writing in the sand, the savior. And he doesn't say, don't take the sacrament for three weeks and I'm going to excommunicate you for a couple of years. He says, go thy way and sin no more. That's what dad believed. Now, if there were bad experiences maybe and some visible things, but in general, his approach was go thy way and sin no more. He just believed that God, as it says in the Doctrine and Covenants, he'd forgive and forget. And I tell you what, that's a wonderful way to approach life as opposed to, well, I shouldn't do this but I'm going to. We had a sweet man that was in our ward. I'm a deacon and I remember he was a bishop long before I knew about any of these kind of things. He'd been a bishop. He'd counseled a woman and gotten involved and gotten excommunicated. And he sat on our back row of our ward for years and years. And I know because I was a deacon and we all knew to pass it to him and he'd pass it to his family. And he was kept out of the church because of a problem he made. And dad wrote, I think I wrote us in the book, you know, we made Alma the president of the whole true church. Alma. Paul. On and on and on. And yet we're keeping people out and we're making them suffer because suffering is somehow part of repent. He just didn't believe it. That also applied to the way he approached. So you think about the thousands, I don't know what the number is, but it must be probably thousands, maybe hundreds of stake conferences. What's his goal? Here comes the general authority to visit your stake. You're the stake presidency. You're a little concerned. This guy's coming from Salt Lake. What's he going to find? I'm, fast forward now, I'm a bishop in my ward. I'm at a funeral. The funeral home guy, the fellow that takes the casket in and out, says, Bishop Hanks, may I speak with you in your office? I said, sure. And he comes in, he sits down, he says, you don't know me. He looks like he's in his mid-60s. I was a stake president in the Midwest. I want to tell you a story about your dad. And I'm like, well, there's a... He said, just wait, we have time. He said, we had an apostle come to our stake and look at all the numbers and look at what we were doing and just beat us senseless. We went home dejected with our head between our hanging down, our countenance was down, everything, we all felt like what in the world. He said, frankly, I went home and told my wife, I need a bath, I need a shower. Said your dad came, he was the next visitor to our stake and the short version of it is he left us uplifted, encouraged with hope and gratitude for our willingness to be in a stake presence. He said when the previous general authority visited, we all felt like we needed a shower. When your dad left, we all felt like we had one. And that's a pretty poignant story. I've tried to be like that as best I can. I'm sure I've failed. But what he did was he wanted to uplift the individual. And he didn't feel the need to beat up. People already know where their weaknesses are, right? They don't need help. I already know what my sins and weaknesses are. I don't need help on that. And so he chose to follow the Savior's way, which is this lifting. Lift me up is how he talked.



Kurt Francom:

Yeah, love it. Any other point principle that we want to squeeze in here?

Rich Hanks:

I think part of dad's uniqueness, in addition to the things we've talked about, service, and was his willingness to walk the talk on things. And, you know, here he is able to speak and is speaking all over the world and large congregations, not just church, but also secular ones. You know, he was slated to be the president of the Boy Scouts of America when he was sent to Hong Kong. At the same time, he was slated to be president of the Rotary Club, which is massive. People don't know how massive the Rotary Club is. So here he is speaking all over and then the thing I wanted to point out is then he walked to the top when no one could see. And I'm going to give you some examples that are going to blow your mind because they're just so simple. He made me take his garbage over at his house. He'd say, take the garbage out, will you Rich on Tuesday? And I'd say, sure dad. And he'd say, make sure you put it all the way down the street. He lived on this cul-de-sac with six homes. And I said, why is that? And he said, so the other people don't have to walk so far. We're walking down the street. I'm a little boy. I'm walking behind him. There's two elderly ladies that crosswalk. They look like they're in their 80s, maybe 90s. Puts his hands through both of their arms and says, ladies, I'm feeling kind of shaky on my feet today. Would you help me across the street? He'd get home from state conference, he'd be exhausted. There'd be a big snow in Salt Lake and we'd get out in the Bronx. He'd say, Rich, fire up the Bronco. We'd go and we'd get in the Bronco and go out and drag people out with chains who were stuck in snow drifts. Yeah. I mean, I literally could go on and on and on. He just, it was just his way to do, to walk the talk. One of my absolute favorite stories is he's flying from Honolulu to Salt Lake stopover in Oakland, gets at the airport and meets a young Marine with his wife. His wife's pregnant with a little child, a little child and pregnant. She's flying home to Salt Lake from Honolulu having seen her husband. The plane is late and gets in Oakland after or with I guess just a few minutes before the connecting flight to Salt Lake happens. They're both on the plane, they're nowhere near each other. He's probably sitting in the front of the plane and she's probably sitting in the middle of the plane with a child and is pregnant. They get off, she gets off and she starts to run with all her bags and the child. And here comes my dad flying down the other way and he... He had gotten off the plane and took off running and walked, he couldn't do this today, walked onto the Delta flight to the cockpit and said, gentlemen, there is a pregnant woman with a child who needs to get to Salt Lake. Will you hold this plane? I'll be right back. And then he ran all the way down to her, took the child and some of the baggage and they went together and made the plane. That's, it seems like a simple little thing, but not to me. Yeah, that's huge. Because that's what he did, and he did it all the time. And then, you know, the next day, he'd be up on stage in front of 5,000 people talking about what Jesus taught us. And then I would think, well, I just saw that yesterday. But he never made a big deal about it. He didn't really talk to anybody about it.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah. Well, in those days that it's tough to be like Jesus, we can at least try and be like Duff Hanks. Well, I don't know. Thank you. And here's the book, *To Be a Friend of Christ, The Life of Mary D. Hanks*. And where would you send people to check it out?

Rich Hanks:

I'd just say there are a few local LDS bookstores, but you can always get it on Amazon. Perfect.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah. And I read every word and loved it. You know, everybody loves the early church history years, but my favorite part of church history is the years that he lived because it's inspiring just to see how the church functioned in those modern days with great leaders who weren't perfect, but tried to make a difference in the kingdom. Can I finish with one last quick thing?

Rich Hanks:

Yeah. The opening line of the book. So, think about that. What are you going to put? You're writing a book about your dad, right? What are you going to put as the opening line and the closing line? And we've talked about his life and some of the things he focused in on. And I chose to write, Marian Duff Hanks was a believer. Yeah, and that's, I didn't put it as the last sentence, but it's the second to the last sentence, I think. Marian Dove Hanks was a believer, and I'm grateful for that. I'm grateful that I was able, my sisters and I were able to be born to believing parents. Didn't make it easy, and it didn't make it without its difficulties, but we always knew that Jesus was at the center of his life.

Kurt Francom:

Hey, you made it to the end of the episode. Wasn't that so good? You know, I tend to pinch myself that this is what I get to do. I get to sit down with some remarkable people across the world, experts, everyday leaders, PhDs, therapists, whatever it be, and have such an impactful conversation. I hope you'll share it, drop it into text message and email and share it to someone who maybe came to mind during this episode. And if you go to the show notes and scroll to the bottom, there's actually a list of some of our most popular episodes. So, don't stop with this episode. I mean, you're not done with the dishes or mowing the lawn or working out, so you might as well keep it going at the bottom of those show notes and make sure you listen to each

one, maybe a couple times on a few of them. Remember, up your teaching game by listening to the David Farnsworth presentation by visiting [leadingsaints.org](http://leadingsaints.org) slash 14.

Gordon B. Hinckley:

It came as a result of the position of leadership which was imposed upon us by the God of heaven who brought forth a restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. When the declaration was made concerning the only true and living church upon the face of the earth, we were immediately put in a position of loneliness. The loneliness of leadership from which we cannot shrink nor run away and to which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability.