

Following is a short piece about his last days given by Sister McConkie.

Sister McConkie's story: with I believe In Christ

"In Relief Society today our closing song was 'I Believe in Christ.' Then, as we began our Fast and Testimony meeting, our opening song was 'I Believe in Christ.' This coincidence made me think that perhaps it's time I share with you how we got this hymn.

"Some 15 years ago, my husband Bruce R McConkie was very ill. The doctor told us he had two months to live, at the most. However, Bruce felt he still had some things he wanted to do. The Brethren gave him a blessing and his family gathered to share their faith and prayers. He lived an additional fourteen months, although he was very ill much of that time. He never thought he wasn't going to get better. He told me time and time again that this was the Lord's test for him, and that he had enough faith in and of himself to be healed.

"Early in February, on an overcast day much like today, I decided to make a pie to cheer him up, as he loved pie. While I was doing this he lay on the floor in our bedroom, which he often did. He had a pencil and paper in hand and was writing. Then he came into the kitchen where I was working and said, 'Do you want to hear what I'm going to talk about in conference?'

"The pie was almost finished and I wanted to get it in the oven, but I soon realized that you don't make pies while he's talking like this. So I stopped and sat down to listen. He read to me his talk, and I said, 'It's the most beautiful thing you've ever written, but how will you ever do it?' He was so ill and so weak. 'I don't know,' he answered, 'but I will.'

"His doctor was so worried, 'You've got a dying man on your hands; you must not let him speak at conference. If he tries, he will collapse on nationwide television.' But I couldn't try to stop him. He was determined to do it and nothing could have stopped him. Our son said, 'I don't think there's anything Dad wanted to do more than preach that last sermon at Conference.' So our children fasted together, asking that their father would have the physical and emotional strength to fulfill his wish.

"During the Saturday morning session of April 1985 General Conference, a thin Bruce R. McConkie took his place at the pulpit and despite his weakened condition, he bore majestic testimony to the truths so integral to his life and mission. He testified, 'I am one of his witnesses, and in a coming day I shall feel the nail marks in his hands and in his feet and shall wet his feet with my tears. But I shall not know any better than I know now that he is God's Almighty Son, that he is our Savior and Redeemer, and that salvation comes in and through his atoning blood and in no other way.' (Excerpted from his conference address).

"The following Sunday Elder Packer visited him at home and gave him a blessing in which he told Bruce he should 'quit resisting the will of the Lord.' We both knew that he meant. At the conclusion, with tears running down his face, Bruce looked at me as I stood at the foot of the bed, and said, 'Amelia, do you know what he just did?' "Yes,' I answered, 'he has sealed you unto death.'

"That was so hard on Bruce. He wanted so much to live.. But as I showed Elder Packer out, Bruce got up, folded the bedspread as he always did at night, got ready for bed, and got under the covers. Always before he would insist that I make the bed and he would lay on top of it, fully dressed.

But this was his way of saying to the Lord, 'I am bowing to your will.' He passed away a short time later."

"What a great blessing to have the beautiful hymn, "I Believe in Christ", taken from his testimony.