

Installation of and Charge to the President

SPENCER W. KIMBALL

Members of the General Authorities and the BYU Board of Trustees, Elder Maxwell, President Holland and faculty, students, and friends of Brigham Young University—greetings. I extend a warm welcome to all of you on this historic and happy occasion: the inaugural of Dr. Jeffrey R. Holland as the ninth president of Brigham Young University.

First, I wish to congratulate and commend my dear friend Dr. Dallin H. Oaks and his predecessors who have brought this great university from a small and humble beginning to the high point at which it now stands. Marvelous has been their labor and devoted has been their service. With all our hearts we thank President Oaks and the great men who preceded him. We honor them and rejoice in their many accomplishments.

My beloved brothers and sisters, it is my responsibility and my privilege to give to President Holland his charge as he begins his presidency at this great university. I do so

representing the First Presidency and the BYU Board of Trustees.

May I say to you, President Holland, that we love you and sustain you and rejoice in your worthiness to hold such a responsible position in the Lord's kingdom. Your academic achievements are well known. These, together with your spiritual preparation and your great testimony and faith, will bless the lives of this splendid faculty and of the students. We commend your lovely wife and children for their support. They are your greatest treasure and will be a shining example to the youth of this university.

In some remarks I made at this university in 1975, I employed a phrase to describe the Brigham Young University as becoming an "educational Mt. Everest."¹ First, it seems to us, President Holland, that such a term was never more appropriate than it is now, on the occasion of your inauguration, for such is your challenge. There are many ways in which BYU can tower above

Spencer W. Kimball, president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, delivered this address at the inauguration of Jeffrey R. Holland as BYU president on November 14, 1980.

other universities—not simply because of the size of its student body or its beautiful campus spread out below magnificent mountains but by the unique light BYU can send forth into the educational world. That light must have a special glow. You will do many things in the programs of this university that are done elsewhere, but you must do them better. At the same time, we expect you to do some special things here at BYU that are left undone by other institutions.

Second, education on this campus deliberately and persistently must concern itself with “education for eternity,”² not just for mortal time. You and your faculty have a dual heritage that you must pass along: the secular knowledge that history has amassed over the centuries along with new knowledge brought by scholarly research, and also the vital and revealed truths that have been given to us from heaven.

This university shares with other universities the hope and the labor involved in rolling back the frontiers of knowledge, but we also know that through divine revelation there are yet “many great and important things”³ to be given to mankind that will have an intellectual and spiritual impact far beyond what mere men can imagine. Thus, at this university, among faculty, students, and administration, there is and there must be an excitement and an expectation about the very nature and future of knowledge that underlies the uniqueness of BYU.

Third, BYU must be a bastion against the invading ideologies that seek control of curriculum as well as classroom. We do not resist such ideas because we fear them but because they are false. BYU must continue to resist false and capricious fashions in education, holding fast to those basic principles that have proved true and right and that have guided good men and women and good universities over the centuries.

Fourth, I am both hopeful and expectant that from this university there will rise brilliant stars in drama, literature, music, art, science, and all the scholarly graces. This university can be the refining host for many such individuals who in the future, long after they have left this campus, can lift and inspire others around the globe.

We must be patient as well as persistent in this effort because just as the city of Enoch took time to reach its pinnacle of performance in what the Lord described as occurring “in process of time,”⁴ so the quest for excellence at BYU must also occur “in process of time.”

Fifth, quality teaching is a tradition never to be abandoned. It includes trusting relationships between faculty and students. Continue these in your new administration. We remember the directive that President John Taylor made to [the founders of what is today known as Snow College]:

Whatever you do, be choice in your selection of teachers. We do not want infidels to mould the minds of our children. They are a precious charge bestowed upon us by the Lord, and we cannot be too careful in rearing and training them. I would rather have my children taught the simple rudiments of a common education by men of God, and have them under their influence, than have them taught in the most abstruse sciences by men who have not the fear of God in their hearts.⁵

In the book of Mosiah we read, “Trust no one to be your teacher nor your minister, except he be a man of God, walking in his ways and keeping his commandments.”⁶

Sixth, remember that as the Church grows globally and becomes more and more multicultural, a smaller and smaller percentage of our Latter-day Saint college-age students will attend BYU or the other Church schools. More and more it will be a privileged group who are able to come here. Those who are blessed to attend BYU have a great responsibility to make certain that the Church’s investment in them provides dividends through service and dedication to others as they labor in the Church and in the world. Your challenge is to assure that this investment does bear fruit, “a consummation / Devoutly to be wish’d.”⁷

Lastly, it should be obvious to us all that the ultimate future of BYU is partially hidden from our immediate view. Until we have climbed the hills just ahead, we cannot glimpse what lies beyond. And the hills ahead are higher than we think. We cannot be transported over them without meeting demanding challenges. Such will be

your challenge, President Holland. You must fortify yourself to guide this great university by wisdom and by inspiration. You will not always be able to see the future, but by drawing close to our Heavenly Father you will be guided. This is His work. This is His university. You are His servant. You are on His errand.

As previous First Presidencies have said, we say again to you: We expect—we do not merely hope—that Brigham Young University will “become a leader among the great universities of the world.”⁸ To that expectation I would add, “Remain a unique university in all the world!” Then, in the process of time, this truly will become the fully recognized university of the Lord about which so much has been spoken in the past.

Your feet are planted on the right path, and you are headed in the right direction! Such academic adjustments as need to be made will be made out of the individual and collective wisdom we find when a dedicated faculty works with a wise administration, an inspired governing board of trustees, and appreciative and responsive students.

Dr. Jeffrey R. Holland, representing the Church Board of Education and the BYU Board of

Trustees, I officially install you as the new president of Brigham Young University. I invoke the blessings of our Heavenly Father upon you and your family. May you go forward with enthusiasm and great courage, knowing you are loved by Him and by us, your fellow servants. For this I pray, humbly, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. See Spencer W. Kimball, “The Second Century of Brigham Young University,” BYU devotional address, 10 October 1975.
2. Spencer W. Kimball, “Education for Eternity,” pre-school address to BYU faculty and staff, 12 September 1967.
3. Articles of Faith 1:9.
4. Moses 7:21.
5. John Taylor, “Discourse,” *Deseret News*, 20 June 1883, 338; *JD* 24:168–69 (19 May 1883).
6. Mosiah 23:14.
7. William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, act 3, scene 1, lines 63–64.
8. Harold B. Lee, “Be Loyal to the Royal Within You,” BYU devotional address, 11 September 1973; quoted in Spencer W. Kimball, “Second Century.”