

ENVISIONING BYU

VOLUME 2

Learning and Light

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Edited by

JOHN S. TANNER

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

PROVO, UTAH

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To all those who have believed in and
contributed to BYU's inspired mission—
and to those who will yet do so.

—JOHN S. TANNER

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Above all, I am indebted to my wife, Susan, for her help and support. Susan has the mission of BYU in her soul.

—JOHN S. TANNER

FOREWORD

THIS SECOND VOLUME of *Envisioning BYU* builds on the foundational and visionary speeches in the first volume—particularly “The Basic Constitution of Church Education” (selections from Doctrine and Covenants 88, 90, and 93) and President Spencer W. Kimball’s address “The Second Century of Brigham Young University.”

In Doctrine and Covenants 88, the Lord charged Joseph Smith to establish a house of faith and learning.¹ This divine injunction was partially realized by the building of the Kirtland Temple and the establishment of the School of the Prophets and is frequently echoed in reference to BYU and other schools of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They, too, are to be houses of faith and learning, where worthy participants can learn and be taught “by study and also by faith.”² In his second-century address, President Kimball charged BYU to be a “unique light” in the academic firmament.³ This charge has been reiterated often on campus, especially of late. This volume is intended to deepen readers’ understanding of BYU’s aspirations to teach and learn by study and by faith and to be a unique light.

Volume 2 is divided into two thematic units corresponding to these prophetic injunctions: section one is titled “A House of Faith and Learning”; section two is titled “A Unique Light.” In addition, a third section, “On Learning and Light at BYU,” offers ten brief perspectives about how BYU’s unique learning and teaching environment can help the university fulfill its divinely appointed destiny. The book closes with two stirring talks given at the inauguration of C. Shane Reese as the fourteenth president of the university. The

contents of this volume can be found electronically at speeches.byu.edu/envisioning-BYU.

The two thematic units are framed by talks from President Dallin H. Oaks. “A House of Faith” was given early in his tenure as BYU president. In it he reflected on both President Kimball’s second-century address and Doctrine and Covenants 88, which he called “the first and greatest revelation of this dispensation on the subject of education” and “still the basic constitution of Church education.” President Oaks added that the revelation “defines Brigham Young University’s role in the kingdom.”⁴ The final talk by President Oaks was delivered almost a half century later, based on his long acquaintance with BYU and on his current perspective as a counselor in the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In this talk, titled “Going Forward in the Second Century,” President Oaks highlighted the importance of BYU’s remaining unique. I hope that these book-ends from President Oaks, who has watched the university reach toward its potential over the last fifty years, will give perspective to all the entries in between.

In Doctrine and Covenants 88 we read a touching salutation that teachers were to give to students in the School of the Prophets:

*I salute you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, in token or remembrance of the everlasting covenant, in which covenant I receive you to fellowship, in a determination that is fixed, immovable, and unchangeable, to be your friend and brother through the grace of God in the bonds of love.*⁵

The spirit of this salutation should characterize all our relationships on campus. I offer it “in the bonds of love” to readers of *Envisioning BYU*, confident that if the university’s faculty, staff, and students will engrave the sentiments contained herein on their hearts and embed the discourses in these volumes deep in campus culture, BYU will fulfill the inspired mission that prophets and leaders have long envisioned for it.

—JOHN S. TANNER

NOTES

1. See Doctrine and Covenants 88:119.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 88:118.
3. Spencer W. Kimball, “The Second Century of Brigham Young University,” BYU devotional address, 10 October 1975.
4. Dallin H. Oaks, “A House of Faith,” BYU annual university conference address, 31 August 1977.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 88:133.



PREFACE

A Certain Idea of BYU

JUSTIN COLLINGS

♦ *BYU Devotional Address, February 1, 2022*

INTRODUCTION



Justin Collings was associate dean and professor in the BYU Law School when he delivered this stirring devotional address. Soon thereafter, he was appointed as associate academic vice president for faculty development, and he currently serves as academic vice president. His visionary devotional articulates the idea of BYU, understanding “idea” in the way that John Henry Newman spoke of the idea of the university, meaning its purpose or aims (see *The Idea of a University* [Longmans, Green and Co: London, 1925]).

Collings encouraged BYU students to seek holiness, learning, revelation, the best gifts, Christlike exemplars, and, above all, the Savior Himself. Collings’s devotional touches on many of the themes in *Envisioning BYU*. As such, it provides a fitting preface for this volume as well as a primer for all the volumes in the series.

*I hope you will seek holiness,
seek learning, seek revelation,
seek the best gifts, seek
Christlike exemplars, and,
above all, “seek this Jesus
of whom the prophets and
apostles have written.”*

—JUSTIN COLLINGS



INTRODUCTION: UNIQUE IN ALL THE WORLD

ALL MY LIFE,” said Charles de Gaulle, “I have had a certain idea of France.”¹

My own life has also been profoundly shaped by an idea—not of a nation but of a school. All my life I have harbored a certain idea of BYU.²

An idea, that is, of “a school in Zion.”³

A school conceived in revelation and dedicated to the proposition that “the glory of God is intelligence.”⁴

A school whose roots run deep in the rich soil of the Restoration—a thrilling theology thundering to all the world that “it is impossible . . . to be saved in ignorance.”⁵

A school relentlessly concerned with “education for eternity”⁶—education of the whole person, the eternal soul.

A school that insists emphatically and unflinchingly “that we [can indeed] have it both ways, that superb scholarship and rock-solid faith” are not only compatible but “inextricable.”⁷

A school where teachers keep their “subject matter bathed in the light and color of the restored gospel” and “occasionally . . . bear formal testimony of the truth.”⁸

A school where not even the alphabet nor the multiplication tables are to be taught without the Spirit of God.⁹

A school that aspires, “in the process of time,” to “become the fully anointed university of the Lord”¹⁰—a school in Zion indeed.

With all my heart, I yearn to keep the faith with this idea of BYU. But I don’t know where to keep that faith if not in the hearts of you students.¹¹ And so, during our brief time together, I hope to transmit to you something of the heritage that others have bequeathed to me. I intend, if you will, to raise the banner of BYU and let it flutter in the

breeze. In the language of two former BYU presidents, I want to “nail our colors to the mast.”¹²

Before you and I were born, President Spencer W. Kimball charged BYU to become and “remain a unique university in all the world.”¹³

Many on this campus have pondered and prayed concerning the source and substance of such singularity. I believe that the beginning and the end of our uniqueness must be you, our incomparable students. We will never, I submit, be unique in the sense that prophets have enjoined unless your experience here is uniquely transformative.

This morning I hope to help you translate the idea of BYU—the visions of prophets and the dreams of professors¹⁴—into an experience as transformative and transcendent as I believe the Lord and His servants expect it to be.

When I was a BYU freshman, President Gordon B. Hinckley outlined six B’s:

1. *Be grateful.*
2. *Be smart.*
3. *Be clean.*
4. *Be true.*
5. *Be humble.*
6. *Be prayerful.*¹⁵

Today, since you are busy earning A’s, and President Hinckley has assigned the B’s, I thought I might suggest six C’s—or rather, six “seeks”: six ideals I hope you will pursue at BYU:

1. *Seek holiness.*
2. *Seek learning.*
3. *Seek revelation.*
4. *Seek the best gifts.*
5. *Seek Christlike exemplars.*
6. *Seek the Savior.*

With a nod to Julie Andrews, let’s start at the beginning.

1. SEEK HOLINESS

“In contrast to the institutions of the world,” said President Dallin H. Oaks, “which teach us to *know* something, the gospel of Jesus Christ challenges us to *become* something.”¹⁶ In that spirit, I encourage you to focus not only on what you are learning at BYU (what you *know*) but even more on what you are becoming (who you *are*). I invite you to strive to become holy—“set apart”¹⁷ for the Lord and His purposes.

Nothing will assist that effort quite like the holy temple. President Russell M. Nelson recently urged us to “implement extraordinary [and unprecedented] measures . . . to strengthen our *personal spiritual* foundations.”¹⁸ And “nothing,” he added, “will strengthen your spiritual foundation like temple service and temple worship.”¹⁹

“If you don’t yet love to attend the temple,” the prophet advised, “go more often—not less.”²⁰ I recommend that you worship in the temple a little more often than you find convenient. As C. S. Lewis once suggested, if our offerings don’t “pinch” us, they probably don’t suffice.²¹

Enshrine the holy temple as the living center of your BYU education. Temple worship must never supplant your formal studies, but it should always frame and enrich them.

2. SEEK LEARNING

Not by accident, “the basic constitution of Church education”²² and the founding charter for temple work are both found in the same revelation: section 88 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Olive Leaf. Indeed, it is not always clear which verses are talking about the school and which about the temple.²³ Perhaps the ambiguity is intentional. In the Lord’s economy, temple and school cannot be neatly divided. At BYU, we nurture a temple-like school in the shadow of a school-like temple.²⁴

Both are places of gathering. We must gather all souls *to* Christ and all truth *in* Christ.²⁵ Hence the soaring curricular mandate set forth in the Olive Leaf and subsequent revelations. We are to explore

*things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations.*²⁶

“Study and learn,” the Lord commanded. “Become acquainted with all good books, and with languages, tongues, and people.”²⁷

“Hasten . . . to obtain a knowledge of history, and of countries, and of kingdoms, of laws of God and man.”²⁸

“Seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith.”²⁹

We need to be unremitting in our study of the best [said BYU professor Arthur Henry King,] because our lives are short. . . .

*One of the great things about great literature is that the greater it is, the greater the scriptures are to us as a result of reading it. . . .
. . . Great art [thus] helps us to praise the Lord.*³⁰

Beloved students, I hope you will spend your time here soaked in the scriptures and steeped in the world’s best books. High adventure awaits you in that glorious, unified quest.

3. SEEK REVELATION

Even more important than seeking wisdom from the best books is seeking inspiration from the Lord Himself. Referring to the Savior, President Nelson has repeatedly implored us to “hear Him.”³¹ In doing so, he has mingled stirring prophecy with sobering admonition:

*Our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, [he said,] will perform some of His mightiest works between now and when He comes again. We will see miraculous indications that God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, preside over this Church in majesty and glory. But in coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, and constant influence of the Holy Ghost.*³²

I submit that nothing you learn at BYU can rival in importance learning to hear the voice of inspiration. Our prophet recently

plead[ed] with [us] to counter the lure of the world by making time for the Lord . . . each and every day

. . . [and by] seeking the Lord through daily prayer and gospel study. . . . Even Saints who are otherwise faithful[, he warned,] can be derailed by the steady beat of Babylon's band.³³

This morning I echo our prophet's plea. Silence that Babylonian drumbeat by making time for the Lord and striving to hear Him every day.

4. SEEK THE BEST GIFTS

You will need revelation and inspiration to fulfill the grand destiny that awaits you after you leave this campus. In the Olive Leaf, after outlining our comprehensive curriculum, the Lord proclaims the purpose of our studies:

That ye may be prepared in all things when I shall send you again to magnify the calling whereunto I have called you, and the mission with which I have commissioned you.³⁴

I don't watch many movies, but one of my favorites is *Chariots of Fire*. In one indelible scene, the film's hero, Eric Liddell, is reproved by his sister Jenny, who thinks that Eric's training to run in the Olympics has distracted him from serving a mission to China.

Jenny, Jenny, [Eric responds,] you've got to understand. I believe that God made me for a purpose. For China. But He also made me fast. And when I run, I feel His pleasure. To give it up would be to hold Him in contempt. You were right. It's not just fun. To win is to honor Him.³⁵

While you are here at BYU, I hope you discover what it is like to feel God’s pleasure when you run—whatever “running” might mean for you. After all, prophets have foretold that, with a diversity of gifts in a variety of fields, BYU graduates are destined to run like the wind.

I am both hopeful and expectant[, said President Kimball,] that out of this university . . . there will rise brilliant stars in drama, literature, music, sculpture, painting, science, and in all the scholarly graces. This university can be the refining host for many such [stars].³⁶

The brightness of these stars, he said, will increase “till the eyes of all the world will be upon us.”³⁷

President Kimball prefigured a time when BYU would produce sculptors like Thorvaldsen and Michelangelo; composers like Wagner and Verdi; singers like Adelina Patti and Jenny Lind; painters like Leonardo and Raphael; scientists like Einstein; statesmen like Lincoln; violinists like Paganini; pianists like Liszt; poets like Goethe; and playwrights like Shakespeare and Shaw.³⁸

“I envision that day,” President Kimball said, “when the BYU symphony will surpass in popularity and performance the Philadelphia Orchestra or the New York Philharmonic.”³⁹

President Kimball suggested that not only will BYU students match some of history’s greatest luminaries but that some of you—empowered by righteousness, enlightened by the Restoration, and inspired by personal revelation—might well surpass them.

A startling, stirring, audacious dream—but a dream that is yours to fulfill.⁴⁰

Take a Nicodemus[, said President Kimball,] and put Joseph Smith’s spirit in him, and what do you have? Take a da Vinci or a Michelangelo or a Shakespeare and give him a total knowledge of the plan of salvation . . . and personal revelation and cleanse him, and then . . . look at the statues he will carve[,] . . . the murals he will paint[,] and the masterpieces he will produce. Take a Handel with his purposeful effort, his superb talent, and his earnest desire

*to properly depict the story and give him inward vision of the whole true story and revelation, and what a master you [will] have!*⁴¹

My young friends, sometimes when I hear you sing or play or watch you dance, I think of President Kimball, and I struggle to fight back tears. You are in the process of performing what only a prophet could dare to dream. But you have miles to go before your rendezvous with destiny and many mountains yet to climb. So keep striding and keep climbing until you scale those summits of destiny with the toil and prayer of impossible dreams.

With all of this, I offer a caution. Never mistake your gifts for a sign of special merit or an excuse from the requirements of righteousness. Goodness is better than greatness. And “the truest greatness,” as President Joseph F. Smith observed, is “to do well those things which God ordained to be the . . . lot of all mankind.”⁴² Ignore this truth and you risk one day recalling with sorrow the poignant warning President Boyd K. Packer memorably invoked: “There are many who struggle and climb and finally reach the top of the ladder, only to find that it [was] leaning against the wrong wall.”⁴³

Please don’t think of yourself primarily as a singer or composer or painter or sculptor or poet or writer or scholar or statesman or scientist. Think of yourself as a witness and of your craft as a way to tell the wonders of your Lord.⁴⁴

Most of us, of course, will bear witness in less prominent ways. “To every [one],” the revelation assures, “is given a gift by the Spirit of God.”⁴⁵ Many years ago, Elder Marvin J. Ashton highlighted several

*less-conspicuous gifts[, including] the gift of asking; the gift of listening; the gift of hearing and using a still, small voice; the gift of being able to weep; the gift of avoiding contention; the gift of being agreeable; the gift of avoiding vain repetition; the gift of seeking that which is righteous; the gift of not passing judgment; the gift of looking to God for guidance; the gift of being a disciple; the gift of caring for others; the gift of being able to ponder; the gift of offering prayer; the gift of bearing a mighty testimony; and the gift of receiving the Holy Ghost.*⁴⁶

Such gifts are no less critical for being less conspicuous. And if to spurn our own gifts is to hold God in contempt, then surely He is doubly grieved when we glumly compare our gifts with others'. On this campus at least, we can rejoice in every gift, no matter on whom it's bestowed, even as we adore the Giver of all gifts, "always remembering for what they are given"⁴⁷ and also that "the greatest of these is charity."⁴⁸

5. SEEK CHRISTLIKE EXEMPLARS

Elder Neal A. Maxwell once said this:

How wonderful it is . . . when we can gather in circles of friendship large or small with shared gospel values. . . . You will find the memories of these [gatherings] will achieve a lastingness—not of what you wore or of what the menu was, but rather because of the shared expressions of love and testimony. Especially helpful are the memories of those individuals and friends who are exemplars for you and me by the manner in which they strive so steadily and unapologetically to wear the whole armor of God.⁴⁹

I hope that you are making such memories and finding such exemplars at BYU, both among the faculty and among your fellow students. My life was blessed and changed forever by faculty mentors who modeled in every encounter what it means to be an unwavering and unapologetic disciple whose consecration encompasses the life of the mind.

"A BYU education should be (1) spiritually strengthening, (2) intellectually enlarging, and (3) character building, leading to (4) lifelong learning and service."⁵⁰ You can help fulfill those aims by seeking like-minded and like-hearted friends and mentors with whom you can take control of the spiritual and intellectual quality of your own experience. Create your own opportunities to read, discuss, think, pray, ponder, and worship together.⁵¹

Someone said, "Don't let school get in the way of your education." The extracurricular memories you forge will be all the sweeter because of the rich gospel sociality that surrounds them. Find friends

and mentors who bring out the best in you—who foster the full flowering of your mind, your character, and your faith.

6. SEEK THE SAVIOR

Your greatest Mentor, of course, and your truest Friend will be the Savior of the world Himself. Above all else you seek at BYU, I hope you will seek Him.

Several years ago, our family moved to Berlin, Germany, where I wrote most of my doctoral dissertation. It was a rich and unforgettable experience. Early on, however, I struggled with something of an identity crisis. No one in Germany seemed to care that I was an Ivy League graduate student, and although I could read German legal and historical documents with modest proficiency, my verbal skills were vastly outstripped by virtually every preschooler I met. At church, I struggled to follow discussions or formulate coherent comments, let alone say anything articulate or insightful. Then, as evidence of a deep sense of divine humor, I was called to serve as the ward choir director—an assignment for which I would have been hopelessly unqualified even in my native tongue.

At about this time, our ward mourned the passing of Gisela Berndt, a powerful leader of the Church in Germany. For many years, Sister Berndt and her husband hosted then Elder Thomas S. Monson during his frequent visits to Germany. Sister Berndt's children, children-in-law, and grandchildren formed the nucleus of our ward and the core cadre of our ward and stake leadership. The German Saints were deeply saddened by her loss.

To our great surprise, my wife, Lia, and I were asked to sing in a quartet at Sister Berndt's funeral. The music assigned was entirely new to me—a magnificent setting of Martin Luther's marvelous translation of the 23rd Psalm.

We did our best. (As usual, Lia's best was significantly better than mine.) I believe we sang with heavenly help. Later on, when our youngest child grew restless, we took her out into the foyer, where we saw a faithful ward member trying in vain to prop open the stake center's external door so that the pallbearers could escort the deceased to

her final resting place. Responding to nudges from both Lia and the Spirit, I volunteered to hold the door open manually.

So it was that I stood watching—a human door prop—as this elect lady moved on toward her eternal reward. I felt that I stood on sacred ground—that I was the recipient of an honor I had not earned, one of the great honors of my life. Together with that impression there came thundering through my soul the rough sense of a half-remembered scripture: “I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.”⁵² I would rather, I realized, fill the lowliest station within the Savior’s kingdom than the loftiest station outside it.

*One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of [my] Lord, and to inquire in his temple.*⁵³

Brothers and sisters, I am, by vocation and training, a scholar of constitutional law. But by conviction and yearning, I am a disciple of Jesus Christ.

I long to look to Him “in every thought.”⁵⁴

I hope to be loyal to Him, to His true and living Church, and to His special witnesses—chosen messengers of my Father in Heaven whom I sustain lovingly but resoundingly as prophets, seers, and revelators.

Although we sometimes speak of balancing our secular studies and our spiritual devotions, I hope instead to unite them in a spirit of ever-deepening consecration.

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness,” the Savior said, “and all these things shall be added unto you.”⁵⁵

I realize that I am not much of a visual aid, but I happen to be married to the most fiercely consecrated person I have ever known. Sometimes Lia has dragged me along kicking and screaming, and sometimes I have sprinted my fastest, huffing and puffing in her wake. But on the whole, we have tried together to learn the Lord’s will for us and to do it the best we can. At every step, the Lord has blessed us beyond our merits—often beyond our comprehension. As we have

tried to let God prevail, He has showered us with multitudes of mercy and cataracts of grace. He will do as much and more for you.

CONCLUSION

In this school's earliest, financially desperate days, one of its leaders, Zina Young Williams, a daughter of Brigham Young, visited the Lord's prophet, President John Taylor, to ask for counsel and support.

He took my hand in a fatherly way[, Dean Williams recalled,] and said, "My dear child, I have something of importance to tell you. . . . I have been visited by your father. He came to me in the silence of the night clothed in brightness and . . . told me . . . that the school being taught by Brother [Karl G.] Maeser was accepted in the heavens and was a part of the great plan of life and salvation; that . . . there was a bright future in store . . . for the children of the covenant . . . and that Christ himself was directing and had a care over this school."⁵⁶

Beloved students, that bright future is your future because Christ Himself is directing and has a care over you.

"I am Messiah," He told Enoch, "the King of Zion."⁵⁷ In a coming day, He will return to His city to reign in final glory: "And . . . the righteous shall be gathered . . . from . . . all nations, and shall come to Zion, singing . . . songs of everlasting joy."⁵⁸

But I ask: who will compose those anthems, if not you?

Who, if not you, will pen their lyrics and sing them with richness and power?

Who, if not you, will design Zion's temples and adorn her towers?

Who, if not you, will paint her murals, carve her sculptures, chronicle her history, direct her dramas, produce her films, contrive her technical wonders, and chant her epic poems?

How will Zion arise and put on her beautiful garments if you're not there to show the way?

*Hope for light beyond these shadows—
Substance thick of truth unseen—*

*Flashes from some ancient meadow,
Still afire with Eden's sheen.*

*Memories stir within my spirit
Of what I, and worlds, have been;
Music! (my deep soul can hear it)—
Cello, harp, and violin—*

*Horns of Zion faintly blowing,
Blowing faintly from the East,
Gliding on the winds and glowing,
Sounding summons for the Feast.*

*And I see her towers shimmer,
Shining sharp through morning's gray;
Turrets of her temples glimmer
With the glory of new day.*

*All my heart within me brightens,
All my soul, unbidden, sings;
Mind aflame, my spirit lightens—
I would seek that City's King.*

*Far, far off I seek that City,
Fairest under heaven's skies,
Where what faith beholds so pretty
I shall see with unveiled eyes—*

*Where the sanctified and saintly
I may hail and fain embrace;
What I now sense dim and faintly,
I shall there see face to face.*

*Thus, the knight of faith who wanders—
Weary, wounded, worn, and slow—
Shall in that resplendent yonder
Shed his faith and say, "I know."⁵⁹*

Brothers and sisters, in the words of Hugh Nibley, we are still only “approaching Zion.”⁶⁰ But I hope your BYU experience helps you glimpse her towers in the distance and hear her anthems from “the hills ahead.”⁶¹

To that end, I hope you will seek holiness, seek learning, seek revelation, seek the best gifts, seek Christlike exemplars, and, above all, “seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written.”⁶²

As one who spends his workdays studying questions of power and rights, I testify that the only power and rights that finally endure flow from the figure of the Son of God.

He sits “on the right hand of God,” the scripture declares, “to claim of the Father *his rights of mercy*.”⁶³ By virtue of His infinite Atonement, He possesses both the *power* to grant grace and the *right* to extend mercy. And having secured that right at an infinite cost, He will not leave it unasserted.

He will come to you in His more excellent ministry to heal your wounds, succor your weakness, and plead your cause in the courts of grace.

If you will have Him for your Lord, He will claim you as His own.

I declare Him to be the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star; the Holy One of Israel and the Savior of the world; the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Lamb of God. He is our Lord and our King, our Healer and Friend—merciful, majestic, and mighty to save.

In the invincible name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Charles de Gaulle, “Toute ma vie, je me suis fait une certaine idée de la France,” first line in *Les Mémoires de Guerre*, vol. 1 (1954); see Charles de Gaulle, *War Memoirs: The Call to Honour, 1940–1942 (L’Appel)*, trans. Jonathan Griffin (New York: Viking Press, 1955), 3. The historian Julian Jackson used this phrase as the title of a recent biography of de Gaulle (see Julian Jackson, *A Certain Idea of France: The Life of Charles de Gaulle* [London: Allen Lane, 2018]).

2. I have been especially influenced by two collections of talks about BYU: John W. Welch and Don E. Norton, eds., *Educating Zion* (Provo: BYU Studies, 1996); and John S. Tanner, *Learning in the Light: Selected Talks at BYU* (Provo: BYU Studies, 2017).

3. Doctrine and Covenants 97:3. See Jeffrey R. Holland, “A School in Zion,” BYU annual university conference address, 22 August 1988.

4. Doctrine and Covenants 93:36. See Jeffrey R. Holland, “Response: The Idea of Brigham Young University,” *Inaugural Addresses*, 14 November 1980, Brigham Young University, 12; Holland, “A School in Zion.” See also Jeffrey R. Holland, “At Their Most Enlightened and Alert,” BYU devotional address, 6 September 1988.

5. Doctrine and Covenants 131:6.

6. Spencer W. Kimball, “Education for Eternity,” address to BYU faculty and staff, 12 September 1967.

7. Holland, “A School in Zion.”

8. Kimball, “Education for Eternity.”

9. This was Brigham Young’s prime directive to Karl G. Maeser: “Brother Maeser, I want you to remember that you ought not to teach even the alphabet or the multiplication tables without the Spirit of God” (quoted in Reinhard Maeser, *Karl G. Maeser: A Biography by His Son* [Provo: Brigham Young University, 1928], 79).

10. Spencer W. Kimball, “The Second Century of Brigham Young University,” BYU devotional address, 10 October 1975.

11. President Boyd K. Packer observed this about President Henry D. Moyle, one of his mentors: “I could see that he was a keeper of the faith and that the place he wanted to keep it was in those who were younger.” President Packer then referred to the young people of the Church “as keepers of the faith—keepers of the faith kept and preserved because it is embodied in those who are younger” (*Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991], 147).

12. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Nailing Our Colors to the Mast,” BYU devotional address, 10 September 1985; also citing Karl G. Maeser’s farewell address: “The Brigham Young Academy has nailed her colors to the mast” (4 January 1892; in Alma P. Burton, *Karl G. Maeser: Mormon Educator* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1953], 55).

13. Spencer W. Kimball, “Installation of and Charge to the President,” address at the inauguration of Jeffrey R. Holland as BYU president, 14 November 1980. See Kimball, “Second Century”; quoting Harold B. Lee, “Be Loyal to the Royal Within You,” BYU devotional address, 11 September 1973. See also Kevin J. Worthen, “An Obligation to the World,” BYU university conference address, 23 August 2021.

14. See John S. Tanner, “A House of Dreams,” BYU annual university conference faculty session address, 28 August 2007.

15. Gordon B. Hinckley, “First Presidency Message: A Prophet’s Counsel and Prayer for Youth,” *Ensign*, January 2001.

16. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Challenge to Become,” *Ensign*, November 2000; emphasis in original.
17. Bible Dictionary, s.v. “holiness.”
18. Russell M. Nelson, “The Temple and Your Spiritual Foundation,” *Liahona*, November 2021; emphasis in original.
19. Russell M. Nelson, “Make Time for the Lord,” *Liahona*, November 2021.
20. Nelson, “The Temple.”
21. C. S. Lewis, “Social Morality,” in *Mere Christianity* (1952), book 3, chapter 3, paragraph 7.
22. Dallin H. Oaks, “A House of Faith,” BYU annual university conference address, 31 August 1977.
23. See John S. Tanner, “‘One of the Great Lights of the World’: Seeking Learning by Study and Faith at BYU,” BYU annual university conference faculty session address, 23 August 2005.
24. See John S. Tanner, “That All May Be Edified of All,” BYU annual university conference faculty session address, 24 August 2010.
25. Ephesians 1:10.
26. Doctrine and Covenants 88:79.
27. Doctrine and Covenants 90:15.
28. Doctrine and Covenants 93:53.
29. Doctrine and Covenants 88:118.
30. Arthur Henry King, *Arm the Children: Faith’s Response to a Violent World*, ed. Daryl Hague (Provo: BYU Studies, 1998), 131–33.
31. See, for example, Russell M. Nelson, “Hear Him,” *Ensign*, May 2020.
32. Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” *Ensign*, May 2018.
33. Nelson, “Make Time.”
34. Doctrine and Covenants 88:80.
35. The character Eric Liddell in *Chariots of Fire* (1981).
36. Kimball, “Second Century.”
37. Kimball, “Education for Eternity.”
38. See Kimball, “Education for Eternity.”
39. Kimball, “Education for Eternity.”
40. See Tanner, “A House of Dreams.”
41. Kimball, “Education for Eternity.”
42. Joseph F. Smith, “Common-Place Things,” Editorial Thoughts, *Juvenile Instructor* 40, no. 24 (15 December 1905): 752.
43. Boyd K. Packer, “The Arts and the Spirit of the Lord,” BYU fireside address, 1 February 1976.
44. Mosiah 18:9.
45. Doctrine and Covenants 46:11.

46. Marvin J. Ashton, “There Are Many Gifts,” *Ensign*, November 1987; see also Mary Richards, writing about the First Presidency Christmas devotional, “Sister Michelle D. Craig Says ‘Less Conspicuous Gifts’ Can Be Holy Gifts That Bless Others This Christmas,” *Leaders and Ministry, Church News*, 5 December 2021, [thechurchnews.com/leaders-and-ministry/2021-12-05/sister-craig-first-presidency-christmas-devotional-gifts-235455](https://www.thechurchnews.com/leaders-and-ministry/2021-12-05/sister-craig-first-presidency-christmas-devotional-gifts-235455).

47. Doctrine and Covenants 46:8.

48. 1 Corinthians 13:13; see also Moroni 7:45–48. See Todd A. Britsch, “Excellence, Charity, and the University,” BYU annual university conference address, 23 August 1994; see also Dallin H. Oaks, “Why Do We Serve at BYU?” BYU annual university conference address, 23 August 1998.

49. Neal A. Maxwell, “Jesus, the Perfect Mentor,” *Ensign*, February 2001.

50. The Aims of a BYU Education (1 March 1995).

51. See John S. Tanner, “Staying Awake in School,” BYU commencement address to honors students, 14 August 1994; published in Tanner, *Learning in the Light*; see especially 108–9.

52. Psalm 84:10.

53. Psalm 27:4.

54. Doctrine and Covenants 6:36. See David A. Bednar, “Look unto Me in Every Thought; Doubt Not, Fear Not,” BYU leadership meeting address, 16 April 2021.

55. Matthew 6:33. The Joseph Smith Translation prefaces this injunction with “seek not the things of this world” (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 6:38).

56. Zina Presendia Young Williams Card, “Short Reminiscent Sketches of Karl G. Maeser,” unpublished typescript, 3; text modernized; in Zina Young Williams Card papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University; quoted in Paul Thomas Smith, “John Taylor,” in *The Presidents of the Church: Biographical Essays*, ed. Leonard J. Arrington (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 109; also quoted in Tanner, “A House of Dreams.”

57. Moses 7:53.

58. Doctrine and Covenants 45:71.

59. Justin Collings, “Knight of Faith” (unpublished).

60. See Hugh W. Nibley, *Approaching Zion*, ed. Don E. Norton (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1989).

61. Kimball, “Second Century.”

62. Ether 12:41.

63. Moroni 7:27; emphasis added.

A HOUSE OF FAITH AND LEARNING



Seek learning, even by study and also by faith. . . . And establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God.

— DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS 88:118–19



“A House of Faith”

DALLIN H. OAKS

♦ *BYU University Conference Address, August 31, 1977*

INTRODUCTION



Dallin H. Oaks was president of Brigham Young University when he delivered this seminal address to university employees. He discussed the vision of education set forth by the Lord and prophets in such revelations as the Olive Leaf, found in Doctrine and Covenants 88, and President Spencer W. Kimball’s revelatory address “The Second Century of Brigham Young University.” President Oaks then elaborated on the principles that BYU must adhere to in order to realize such a future. Referring to President Kimball’s words, President Oaks asked and then answered the question “How are we to achieve that prophetic destiny as ‘the fully anointed university of the Lord?’” (page 5).

*If we are to become the
household of faith described
in [Doctrine and Covenants 88,]
our ultimate loyalty must be
to the Lord, not to our
professional disciplines.*

— DALLIN H. OAKS



MY DEAR FELLOW WORKERS:

The theme of this annual university conference—“A House of Learning, a House of Faith”—comes from the 88th section of the Doctrine and Covenants.¹ Since I have felt impressed to devote this annual president’s message to a spiritual subject, I will focus on the second half of that theme, pointing to the ideal of Brigham Young University as “a house of faith.”

In his second-century address, delivered on this campus two years ago, President Spencer W. Kimball helped us see Brigham Young University, present and future, through the eyes of a living prophet. He saw the need and challenged us to increase effort and accomplishment in our various responsibilities. He saw the need and exhorted us to greater spirituality and worthiness in our individual lives. Then, with prophetic insight, he concluded with this promise, which identifies our goal and reminds us that we have not yet arrived: “Then, in the process of time, this will become the fully anointed university of the Lord about which so much has been spoken in the past.”²

How are we to achieve that prophetic destiny as “the fully anointed university of the Lord”? (1) We must understand the university’s role in the kingdom of God; (2) we must be worthy in our individual lives; (3) we must be fearless in proclaiming the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ; (4) we must be exemplary in efforts understandable to the world; and (5) we must seek and heed the inspiration of God in the performance of our individual responsibilities. I will discuss each of these requirements in that order.

I. THE UNIVERSITY IN THE KINGDOM

The first and greatest revelation of this dispensation on the subject of education was the 88th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, given

in December 1832 and January 1833. The Lord directed the Saints to build a temple in Kirtland:

*Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God.*³

This revelation also directed the Saints to begin a School of the Prophets. This school, which Joseph Smith promptly established in Kirtland in the winter of 1833, more than three years before the dedication of the temple, was the forerunner of all educational efforts in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The 88th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, which defined the objectives of the School of the Prophets and gave related commandments, counsel, and knowledge, is still the basic constitution of Church education. It defines Brigham Young University's role in the kingdom.

The immediate purpose of the School of the Prophets was to train the restored Church's earliest leaders for the ministry, especially for missionary work. The Church's first educational effort was also intimately related to the teachings to be communicated in the temple. The school was intended to be housed in the temple.⁴

The commandments and knowledge communicated in the 88th section concern the temple, the school, and the work of the ministry as an inseparable and unified whole. That is their eternal relationship. The laws and conventions and shortsightedness of man currently compel us to separate these activities for some purposes, but to a Father in Heaven who has given no temporal law and to whom all things are spiritual,⁵ the work of temple, school, and ministry must all be seen as the unified work of the kingdom.

Often in the last three years I have stood at the window of my office looking out across the northern part of the campus to the Language Training Mission and the temple. I tell the visitors who share this sight that these three institutions—university, mission, and temple—are the most powerful combination of institutions on the face of the earth. They make this place unique in all the world. Now,

after studying the 88th section, I see even more clearly the common origins of all three institutions in a single great revelation. I am grateful that it has been during the period of our service that the servants of the Lord have united in one sacred location the Lord’s university, the Lord’s temple, and the school where His missionaries “become acquainted with . . . languages, tongues, and people.”⁶

We are all familiar with the comprehensive curriculum the Lord outlined in section 88. He directed these early Saints to “teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom”⁷ and “the law of the gospel.”⁸ Beyond that, He commanded them to teach “all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God.”⁹ They must “diligently . . . [seek] words of wisdom . . . out of the best books.”¹⁰ They should be instructed in

*things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms.*¹¹

Two months after the school commenced, the Lord reinforced this breadth of instruction by commanding the Prophet to “study and learn, and become acquainted with all good books, and with languages, tongues, and people.”¹²

The Lord also revealed that the technique of learning was to reach beyond the conventional pedagogy of that day (or this). Those who studied in the School of the Prophets were to “seek learning, even by study and also by faith.”¹³

All these verses from the 88th section are familiar and have often been used to stress the universal concern of our inquiries at Brigham Young University, comprehending the secular as well as the spiritual, and of our special approach to learning, comprehending conventional study and the acquisition of insights from the Spirit through faith. But this great revealed charter of the Church Educational System contains much more.

At the beginning of the 88th section, the Lord instructed His little flock in the most fundamental principle of all learning: All things were made by the power and glory of God and His Son, Jesus Christ.¹⁴ He is the source of the light of the sun and of the light that quickens our understandings.¹⁵ It is through Jesus Christ that we receive “the light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God . . . who is in the midst of all things.”¹⁶

What could be more basic to a learning effort than this knowledge that God is the power by which all things were made and governed and that He is in all things, comprehends all things, and is the source of all enlightenment?

This revelation also declares the purpose of learning in the Church Educational System. It is that we “may be prepared in all things” when the Lord shall send us to magnify the calling whereunto He has called us and the mission with which He has commissioned us.¹⁷ In other words, we receive enlightenment as stewards with a duty to use that knowledge to go out into the world to warn and bless the lives of the Gentiles¹⁸ and “to prepare the saints for the hour of judgment which is to come.”¹⁹

The attitude that should motivate all our efforts in education is specified in the 67th verse of section 88: our eye should be single to the glory of God. That short verse also contains the most significant promise ever given pertaining to education:

And if your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you; and that body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things.

In other words, those who achieve singleness of purpose in love of God and service in His kingdom are promised that they will ultimately comprehend all things. The manner of learning that would fulfill this unique promise was revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith six years later in Liberty Jail:

*God shall give unto you knowledge by his Holy Spirit, yea, by the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost, that has not been revealed since the world was until now.*²⁰

One of the most distinctive characteristics of Brigham Young University in this day is our proud affirmation that character is more important than learning. We are preoccupied with behavior and consider personal worthiness to be an essential ingredient of our educational enterprise. That educational philosophy was revealed by God. Again and again the 88th section stresses the importance of worthiness for teacher and student.

The Lord commanded:

*Prepare yourselves, and sanctify yourselves; yea, purify your hearts, and cleanse your hands and your feet before me, that I may make you clean.*²¹

*Therefore, cease from all your light speeches, from all laughter, from all your lustful desires, from all your pride and light-mindedness, and from all your wicked doings.*²²

Again:

*Abide ye in the liberty wherewith ye are made free; entangle not yourselves in sin, but let your hands be clean, until the Lord comes.*²³

Another verse of commandment concludes with a promise that ties the purifying effort directly to the process and objective of learning:

*Cease to be idle; cease to be unclean; cease to find fault one with another; cease to sleep longer than is needful; retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, **that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated.***²⁴

Soon after the beginning of the School of the Prophets and as a direct result of experiences in the meetings of the school, the Lord gave Joseph Smith the revelation designated as “a Word of Wisdom.”²⁵ This was also a commandment with a promise. Those who observed its proscriptions, “walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones,”²⁶ “shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint,”²⁷ and “the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them.”²⁸ But the promised spiritual blessings were of at least equal importance, especially for those involved in learning:

*And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, . . . shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures.*²⁹

The teacher in the School of the Prophets was commanded to be worthy, prepared, reverent, and exemplary in conduct. The Lord commanded that the teacher “should be first in the house . . . , that he may be an example.”³⁰ He should also “offer himself in prayer upon his knees before God, in token or remembrance of the everlasting covenant.”³¹

The students must also be worthy. When a student entered the School of the Prophets, the teacher was commanded to salute him “in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, in token or remembrance of the everlasting covenant,” in fellowship, and in a determination to be a friend and brother and “to walk in all the commandments of God blameless, in thanksgiving, for ever and ever.”³² If students were unworthy of this salutation and of the covenant, the Lord commanded that they “shall not have place among you.”³³

Finally, the Lord made a promise in the 88th section to all who would participate in the important educational work of His kingdom. This promise applies to efforts in our day just as it did then:

Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

*Whatever ye ask the Father in my name it shall be given unto you.*³⁴

The acquisition of knowledge is a sacred activity, pleasing to the Lord and favored of Him. That fact accounts for what President Kimball called “the special financial outpouring that supports this university.”³⁵ “The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth.”³⁶ The holiest places on earth—the temples of God—are places of instruction. From the beginning of this dispensation the Lord has associated the temple, the school, and the ministry—a trio now brought together in this spot.

Under the direction of the servants of the Lord, Brigham Young University’s role is to be a house of faith, a sanctified and fully effective participant in the revealing and teaching and reforming mission of the kingdom of God. When we can perform this university’s calling in a manner fully acceptable to the Lord and His servants, we will become what President Kimball has called “the fully anointed university of the Lord.”

II. WORTHINESS

If we are to achieve that prophetic destiny, we must follow the general charter of Church education as revealed in the Doctrine and Covenants and the more recent and more specific direction of the living prophets. Each of these authorities has told us that our first challenge is to be worthy in our personal lives.

In the 88th section the Lord commanded His educators to be pure, worthy, prayerful, and exemplary in all things. In his great address to BYU faculty and staff a decade ago, “Education for Eternity,” President—then Elder—Kimball declared: “BYU is dedicated to the building of character and faith, for character is higher than intellect, and its teachers must in all propriety so dedicate themselves.”³⁷ More

recently, President Kimball explained that we cannot make the progress needed at BYU

except we continue . . . to be concerned about the spiritual qualities and abilities of those who teach here. 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.” . . .

We must be concerned with the spiritual worthiness, as well as the academic and professional competency, of all those who come here to teach.³⁸

One of the conditions of employment at Brigham Young University is observance of all the principles of our code of honor. We cannot expect less of ourselves than we expect of our students.

Each worker in this university—and especially those who are in teaching positions, formal or informal—must be role models for the young people who study here. Individuals whose personal life cannot meet that high standard of example are honor bound to repent speedily, seeking the help of their bishop and/or their university supervisor as the circumstances warrant, or to obtain other employment.³⁹

Our annual interviews with all university personnel seek to encourage and assure that worthiness. They must be carried out faithfully by both parties.

I am always humiliated when a bishop or stake president contacts me or another university official to say that there is a BYU teacher or administrator or staff member in his ward or stake who refuses to take Church assignments, is not faithful in attending Church meetings, or does not pay a full tithing.

The payment of an honest tithing is an expectation of employment at Brigham Young University. How could it be otherwise, when about two-thirds of the university’s budget comes from appropriations from the tithes of the Church? These sums are paid in a

*freewill offering by members of the Church throughout the world, often at great sacrifice. Many of these members have standards of living and incomes far below what is enjoyed by the employees of this university.*⁴⁰

The Church holds us up as examples of faithful Latter-day Saints whose lives are worthy of emulation. If leaders or members of our wards know that we are not worthy, our continued employment at BYU is a trial to the faith of those who know us, an insult to the standards of this institution, and an affront to the Church. None of us can afford to be in that position. While we do not expect perfection, we do expect that all our BYU personnel will observe all the principles of our code of honor and that all of us who are members of the Church will be worthy of a temple recommend and will be conscientiously working to preserve and improve our spirituality. We expect the same high standards of personal worthiness of our workers who are not members of our Church, except that they are not expected to pay tithing and they have no responsibility of attendance or activity in our Church.

Workers at BYU are also expected to be worthy examples of Christian living in the performance of all their duties at the university. From time to time we are grieved to receive evidence of dishonesty by BYU employees, including instances in which persons have stolen the property or the time of the university. The theft of university time is far more common and just as deplorable as the theft of property. We are also grieved to hear reports of profanity or abusive language by BYU personnel. Foul language of any kind is deeply resented by students and others and has no place on the job at BYU. The same is true of untruthful reports, backbiting, evil speaking, and excessive displays of anger.

I am always saddened when I hear that supervisors or others at the university have “chewed out” a fellow worker in a degrading manner or have held someone up to public ridicule in the eyes of colleagues, students, or others. We must have high performance from our university workers, and when a person’s performance does not measure up to standards, he or she must be corrected, including, if necessary,

being dismissed from a position or from university employment. All of this will be necessary, just as it is in other employment and, indeed, in Church positions. But we should be consistent with the examples of priesthood leadership, and correction and changes should be accomplished without anger, rancor, or public embarrassment.

We must be especially exemplary in our communications with persons who telephone us or come to the campus as guests. Let us strive to be Christlike in all our personal dealings, always showing gentleness, love, and consideration for all. Only by this means can we be worthy residents and teachers in the household of faith.

III. TESTIMONY AND GOSPEL TEACHING

All who study, teach, or work in a house of faith should be fearless in proclaiming the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit we should testify of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. That faith and testimony should be paramount in our lives and in our teachings.

We must be more explicit about our religious faith and our commitment to it. In doing so we will fill a demonstrated need. Pollster George Gallup recently observed that Americans are “spiritually hungry.”⁴¹ “Increasing numbers . . . are disillusioned with the secular world, have rejected rationalism and are turning to ‘the life of the spirit for guidance.’”⁴² Our students share that hunger, and we must see that they receive spiritual food.

When a student entered the School of the Prophets, the teacher was commanded to salute him in the name of the Lord as a token of their mutual determination to keep the commandments of God.⁴³ To serve that same purpose, our teachers and others in a position of authority at BYU should find occasion to bear their testimonies to students and fellow workers, to express their faith, and to be explicit about the relevance of the gospel in their lives. These commitments and attitudes should be explicit in our teaching. President Kimball underlined the importance of that subject in these words:

I would expect that no member of the faculty or staff would continue in the employ of this institution if he or she did not have deep assurance of the divinity of the gospel of Christ, the truth of the Church, the correctness of the doctrines, and the destiny of the school.

. . . Every instructor knows before coming to this campus what the aims are and is committed to the furthering of those objectives.

If one cannot conscientiously accept the policies and program of the institution, there is no wrong in his moving to an environment that is compatible and friendly to his concepts.⁴⁴

A teacher’s most important possession is his or her testimony of Jesus Christ. It is more important than the canons and theories of any professional field. We should say so to our students. Similarly, we ought not to present ourselves as teachers at Brigham Young University unless we are living so that we are entitled to the continuous companionship and guidance of the Holy Ghost. In my opinion, the Lord’s statement that “if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach”⁴⁵ has very literal application to the teaching activities of this university.

Our testimonies are important to our students and to our fellow workers as our most important common bond. We are privileged to use expressions of faith in our teaching and other associations. In public institutions teachers are less free.

Each teacher must decide how gospel values will be made explicit in his or her own teaching. Some subjects can be permeated with gospel truths and values. In other subjects, reference to the gospel is more difficult. But in every class in this university a teacher can at least begin the teaching effort by bearing testimony of God, by expressing love and support for His servants, and by explaining the importance of the gospel truths in his or her life. And it would always be desirable for a teacher at BYU to affirm publicly the great truth expressed by President Joseph Fielding Smith that “knowledge comes both by reason and by revelation.”⁴⁶ As President Kimball explained:

It would not be expected that all of the faculty should be categorically teaching religion constantly in their classes, but it is proper

that every professor and teacher in this institution would keep his subject matter bathed in the light and color of the restored gospel and have all his subject matter perfumed lightly with the spirit of the gospel. Always there would be an essence, and the student would feel the presence.

Every instructor should grasp the opportunity occasionally to bear formal testimony of the truth. Every student is entitled to know the attitude and feeling and spirit of his every teacher.⁴⁷

This is the responsibility of our non-Latter-day Saint teachers as well, and many fulfill it admirably. We know of several instances in which non-Latter-day Saint BYU faculty members have been among our most effective practitioners and teachers of wholesome Christian values, surpassing some of their Latter-day Saint colleagues in showing how these principles can and should be pervasive in our teaching and associations at BYU.

In my remarks to the faculty two years ago, I suggested that in order to be effective at teaching secular subjects and at integrating gospel concepts, we must be “bilingual.” I urged that we had to “be fluent in the language of scholarship . . . in order to command the respect of [the secular world]” and that we also had to “speak the special language of our faith” to communicate our adherence to the gospel values that illuminate our learning efforts and justify our existence as a university.⁴⁸ I was pleased when President Kimball used this same metaphor in his second-century address and that the idea of being “bilingual” and the phrases “language of scholarship” and “language of [faith]” are becoming a familiar part of our vocabulary.⁴⁹ But much remains to be done before BYU has met this challenge with the needed array of solid achievements in public and private communications.

I now feel prompted to add another dimension. The challenge to be bilingual involves more than the ability to speak both languages. That is a terrestrial skill at best. To be bilingual in the celestial sense, we must use the appropriate combination of the language of scholarship and the language of faith to assure that what we communicate is the whole truth as completely as we perceive it with the full

combination of our scholarly and spiritual senses. That is the culmination of being bilingual. That is what President Harold B. Lee meant when he said that one purpose of our Church schools was

*to teach secular truth so effectively that students will be free from error, free from sin, free from darkness, free from traditions, vain philosophies, and the untried, unproven theories of science.*⁵⁰

If we are to communicate at the highest level of the bilingual, we must be thoroughly prepared in our individual disciplines and also deeply schooled in the gospel.

Last week a student wrote me to complain that we “are not using the teachings of the prophets . . . in our classrooms as we could.”⁵¹ He criticized our teaching, especially in one particular department, as having a lack of balance. He described the prototype of a professor who “has a PhD in his academic discipline and the equivalent of an eighth-grade education in the gospel.”⁵² Although this student did not apply that description to any particular teacher, I would like to consider it as a challenge to each of us. If any teacher at BYU has a doctorate in his or her discipline but only grade-school preparation in the gospel, that teacher needs some spiritual development. The reverse is also true: a doctorate-level knowledge of the gospel will not suffice if we are poorly prepared in our individual disciplines.

In this university we are free to seek the truth—a “knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come.”⁵³ As President Kimball has observed, at BYU we have “real individual freedom. Freedom from worldly ideologies and concepts unshackles man far more than he knows. It is the truth that sets men free.”⁵⁴ Each of us should pursue that truth by study and by faith. Each of us should increase our qualifications to communicate that truth by an inspired combination of the language of scholarship and the language of faith. And each of us should gain a doctorate-level knowledge of the gospel as well as of our individual disciplines.

IV. EXCELLENCE IN SECULAR TERMS

I have already said a great deal on this next topic, so I will add but little here.

In his second-century address, President Kimball also challenged us to excel in terms understandable to the world in our teaching, in our creative work, and in all our activities. “While you will do many things in the programs of this university that are done elsewhere,” he said, “these same things can and must be done better here than others do them.”⁵⁵

We can measure up to that challenge only with solid individual effort. President Kimball declared:

*We must do more than ask the Lord for excellence. Perspiration must precede inspiration; there must be effort before there is excellence. We must do more than pray for these outcomes at BYU, though we must surely pray. We must take thought. We must make effort. We must be patient. We must be professional. We must be spiritual.*⁵⁶

Thus, when President Kimball challenged us to excel at literacy and the teaching of English as a second language, he reminded us that our efforts must be “firmly headquartered in terms of unarguable competency as well as deep concern.”⁵⁷

All this reminds us that we cannot expect to be instruments in advancing the truth in our individual disciplines merely through studying theology and living righteous lives. When the Lord sends us to spread the gospel in all parts of the world, He expects us to use modern technology in transportation and communication. He has revealed these for our use. But isn't it significant that He revealed these scientific wonders through natural channels to persons who were pursuing learning by secular means and for secular purposes?

There have been inspired men and women in every discipline. The Lord expects us to learn what we can from what He has previously revealed. We do not begin by rejecting what we sometimes call “the learning of men.” The learning of men, when it is true, is inspired of

God. We must put our own efforts into paying the price of learning, of degrees, and of all intermediate steps necessary to acquire depth in our individual disciplines and skills. Future revelation in a particular discipline or skill is most likely to come to one who has paid the price of learning all that has previously been revealed. A lawyer is not likely to be inspired with the key to the energy crisis, nor a physicist with new truths about the science of government.

V. INSPIRATION TO ASSIST US

While we must not begin by rejecting the learning of men, we must not be confined by it. We must not be so self-satisfied and so deep in our own disciplines that we cannot be open to the truths contained in the scriptures or the illumination communicated by the Spirit. Can we afford to gloss over the scriptures when the prophet has testified that they “contain the master concepts for mankind”?⁵⁸ Can we afford to make no attempt to use inspiration when that is our designated access to the Source and Author of all truth? In his second-century address, President Kimball declared:

This university shares with other universities the hope and the labor involved in rolling back the frontiers of knowledge even further, but we also know that through the process of revelation there are yet “many great and important things” to be given to mankind that will have an intellectual and spiritual impact far beyond what mere men can imagine.⁵⁹

In light of what the prophet has said, how can we at Brigham Young University do our part “in rolling back the frontiers of knowledge even further”? We will not achieve this goal by the casual use of gospel insights implied in the phrase “philosophies of man mingled with scripture.” If we limit ourselves to the wisdom of men, we will wind up like the Nephites who, boasting in their own strength, were destroyed because they were “left in their own strength.”⁶⁰

If we are to qualify for the choicest blessings of God—if we are to become the household of faith described in the revelation—our

ultimate loyalty must be to the Lord, not to our professional disciplines. Elder Neal A. Maxwell illustrated that principle with the metaphor of the passport: “The LDS scholar has his citizenship in the kingdom, but carries his passport into the professional world—not the other way around.”⁶¹ The Lord once rebuked the Prophet Joseph Smith for a violation of this principle of loyalty. He declared:

*Behold, how oft you have transgressed the commandments and the laws of God, and have gone on in the persuasions of men.
For, behold, you should not have feared man more than God.*⁶²

How would we stand in a conflict between the wisdom of man and the inspiration of God? Do we go on “in the persuasions of men”? Do we fear man more than God? Do we have our citizenship in the professional world and teach or do other work at BYU by virtue of a passport? I suggest that question for prayerful consideration in all our professional work.

This question not only calls on us to identify our ultimate loyalty—which I think each of us would quickly affirm is to the Lord—but also calls on us to authenticate our commitment in a way that is evident in our day-to-day professional work. Consider the implications of President Kimball’s charge that “we must not merely ‘ape the world.’ We must do special things that would justify the special financial outpouring that supports this university.”⁶³ He explained one implication of that principle as follows:

*We must be willing to break with the educational establishment (not foolishly or cavalierly, but thoughtfully and for good reason) in order to find gospel ways to help mankind. Gospel methodology, concepts, and insights can help us to do what the world cannot do in its own frame of reference.*⁶⁴

Are we secure enough in our professional preparation and attainments and strong enough in our faith that we can, as President Kimball said, “break with the educational establishment . . . for good reason . . . in order to find gospel ways to help mankind”? Although

we are beginning to see some brilliant examples of gospel approaches in secular subjects at BYU, many of us are not yet ready to be this bold and this creative. As more and more of us acquire superior professional preparation and unshakable faith, we will see our overall performance improve. And when it does, the results will be spectacular.

Our Father in Heaven has invited us to "cry unto him"⁶⁵ over our crops and our flocks "that they may increase"⁶⁶ and "that [we] may prosper in them."⁶⁷ He has also told us through His prophet, "Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good."⁶⁸ Our Father in Heaven will teach us and help us and magnify us if we will only place our faith in Him and seek the inspiration of His Spirit. In that great charter of learning, the 88th section, He said:

Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; . . . ask, and ye shall receive. . . .

*Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name it shall be given unto you.*⁶⁹

Only by this means, with the Lord's help, sought and received, can we fulfill President John Taylor's remarkable prophecy: "You will see the day that Zion will be as far ahead of the outside world in everything pertaining to learning of every kind as we are today in regard to religious matters."⁷⁰

If we qualify by professional excellence, by worthiness, by loyalty, and by spirituality, we can receive the inspiration of God in our professional work. "We expect the natural unfolding of knowledge to occur as a result of scholarship," President Kimball observed, but then he made this significant promise: "There will always be that added dimension that the Lord can provide when we are qualified to receive and He chooses to speak."⁷¹

The First Presidency illustrated this principle in a special message published only a month ago: "Members of the Church should be peers or superiors to any others in natural ability, extended training, plus the Holy Spirit, which should bring them light and truth."⁷² As Latter-day Saints, we are therefore privileged to augment our individual creative efforts with the insights of the gospel and the guidance of

the Spirit. But as Brigham Young University faculty and staff, we are *responsible* to do so.

If we are to become the fully anointed university of the Lord, we *must* make use of those gospel insights and values “in order to find gospel ways to help mankind.” We must have access to “that added dimension that the Lord can provide when we are qualified to receive and He chooses to speak.” We must make use of those gospel insights and values and those spiritual powers in our teaching, in the selection and development of our creative efforts, and in all our work at the university. I have had that experience in my work, others have enjoyed it also, and I know it is available for those who have not yet experienced it.

On one occasion the Prophet Joseph Smith described the spirit of revelation in this manner:

A person may profit by noticing the first intimation of the spirit of revelation; for instance, when you feel pure intelligence flowing into you, it may give you sudden strokes of ideas, . . . and thus by learning the Spirit of God and understanding it, you may grow into the principle of revelation.⁷³

On a choice occasion early in my service at BYU, when we faced an important and far-reaching decision on our academic calendar, I experienced that kind of revelation as pure intelligence was thrust upon my consciousness. I treasure that experience. It stands as a vivid testimony of the fact that when the matter is of great importance to His children and to His kingdom, our Father in Heaven will assist us when we are qualified and seeking.

At other times, I have felt the promptings of the Spirit to stay my hand from a course of action that was not in the best interest of the university. I was prevented from signing a legal document on one occasion and a letter on another. In each instance we reexamined the proposed action and within a few weeks could see, with the benefit of additional information not available to us earlier, that the restraining hand of the Spirit had saved us from an irreversible error. On another occasion I was prompted to accept a speaking appointment I would normally have declined, and the fulfillment of that assignment turned

out to be one of the most significant public acts of my period of service and has led to many other important invitations, publications, and influences. At other times, in connection with my scholarly work on law and legal history, I have been restrained from publishing something that later turned out to be incorrect, and I have been impressed to look in obscure places where I found information vital to guide me to accurate conclusions on matters of moment in my work.

In all of this, I have been blessed beyond my own powers and have received an inkling of what the Lord can do for us if we qualify and reach out for His help in the righteous cause in which we are engaged.

When we in the household of faith have paid the price of excellence in our preparation and in our individual efforts, when we have become thoroughly schooled in the gospel, when we have qualified ourselves by worthiness and spirituality, and when we are seeking for His guidance continually, as He chooses to speak, and are fully qualified to press on with demonstrable excellence when He leaves us to our own best judgment, we will be making the progress we must make in order to become the fully anointed university of the Lord. Let us reach upward for this higher plane, and let us do so proudly, confidently, and speedily, taking heart in the question and promise of the apostle: “If God be for us, who can be against us?”⁷⁴ May God help us to do what I believe He would have us do is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. See Doctrine and Covenants 88:119.
2. Spencer W. Kimball, “The Second Century of Brigham Young University,” BYU devotional address, 10 October 1975.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 88:119.
4. See Doctrine and Covenants 95:17.
5. See Doctrine and Covenants 29:34.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 90:15.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 88:77.
8. Doctrine and Covenants 88:78.
9. Doctrine and Covenants 88:78.
10. Doctrine and Covenants 88:118.
11. Doctrine and Covenants 88:79.

12. Doctrine and Covenants 90:15.
13. Doctrine and Covenants 88:118.
14. See Doctrine and Covenants 88:5, 7–10.
15. See Doctrine and Covenants 88:7, 11.
16. Doctrine and Covenants 88:13.
17. Doctrine and Covenants 88:80.
18. See Doctrine and Covenants 88:81.
19. Doctrine and Covenants 88:84.
20. Doctrine and Covenants 121:26.
21. Doctrine and Covenants 88:74.
22. Doctrine and Covenants 88:121.
23. Doctrine and Covenants 88:86.
24. Doctrine and Covenants 88:124; emphasis added.
25. Doctrine and Covenants 89:1; see also Doctrine and Covenants 89.
26. Doctrine and Covenants 89:18.
27. Doctrine and Covenants 89:20.
28. Doctrine and Covenants 89:21.
29. Doctrine and Covenants 89:18–19.
30. Doctrine and Covenants 88:130.
31. Doctrine and Covenants 88:131.
32. Doctrine and Covenants 88:133.
33. Doctrine and Covenants 88:134.
34. Doctrine and Covenants 88:63–64.
35. Kimball, “Second Century.”
36. Doctrine and Covenants 93:36.
37. Spencer W. Kimball, “Education for Eternity,” address to BYU faculty and staff, 12 September 1967.
38. Kimball, “Second Century”; quoting Mosiah 23:14.
39. Dallin H. Oaks, “Annual Report on the University,” *The Second Century: On with the Task*, 1976 BYU annual university conference speeches, 24 (24 August 1976).
40. Oaks, “Annual Report,” 25.
41. George Gallup Jr., quoted in Religious News Service, “Gallup Says Americans ‘Spiritually Hungry,’ Reject Rationalism,” Religion, *Washington Post*, 13 May 1977, E6.
42. Religious News Service, “Spiritually Hungry,” E6; quoting George Gallup Jr.
43. See Doctrine and Covenants 88:132–33.
44. Kimball, “Education for Eternity.”
45. Doctrine and Covenants 42:14.
46. Joseph Fielding Smith, “Educating for a Golden Era of Continuing Righteousness,” BYU Campus Education Week address, 8 June 1971.

47. Kimball, “Education for Eternity.”
48. Dallin H. Oaks, “Accomplishments, Prospects, and Problems in the Centennial Year,” *BYU Centennial: A Century of Love of God, Pursuit of Truth, Service to Mankind*, 1975 BYU annual university conference speeches, 20 (26 August 1975).
49. See Kimball, “Second Century.”
50. Harold B. Lee, “The Mission of the Church Schools,” *Ye Are the Light of the World: Selected Sermons and Writings of President Harold B. Lee* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974), 104.
51. Student letter to Dallin H. Oaks, received 12 August 1977.
52. Student letter.
53. Doctrine and Covenants 93:24.
54. Kimball, “Second Century.”
55. Kimball, “Second Century.”
56. Kimball, “Second Century.”
57. Kimball, “Second Century.”
58. Kimball, “Second Century.”
59. Kimball, “Second Century”; quoting Articles of Faith 1:9.
60. Helaman 4:13.
61. Neal A. Maxwell, “Some Thoughts on the Gospel and the Behavioral Sciences,” *Speaking Today, Ensign*, July 1976.
62. Doctrine and Covenants 3:6–7.
63. Kimball, “Second Century.”
64. Kimball, “Second Century.”
65. Alma 34:20, 24.
66. Alma 34:25.
67. Alma 34:24.
68. Alma 37:37.
69. Doctrine and Covenants 88:63–64.
70. John Taylor, *Deseret News*, 1 June 1880, 1; see also John Taylor, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1854–86), 21:100 (13 April 1879).
71. Kimball, “Second Century.”
72. Spencer W. Kimball, “The Gospel Vision of the Arts,” *Ensign*, July 1977; see also Kimball, “Education for Eternity.”
73. Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1902–32), 3:381 (27 June 1839); also in *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, ed. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972), 151.
74. Romans 8:31.



“I Say unto You, Be One”

BOYD K. PACKER

♦ *BYU Devotional Address, February 12, 1991*

INTRODUCTION



Boyd K. Packer was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles when he delivered this address explaining how the BYU Board of Trustees makes decisions in unity. He also discussed threats on the horizon facing BYU and other religiously affiliated universities. Elder Packer spoke encouragingly of BYU’s future: in a field of predominantly secular universities, BYU can stand out by using the catalyst of the Spirit to blend academic and spiritual pursuits.

This talk has been excerpted; for the full text, visit speeches.byu.edu/envisioning-BYU.

*If we succeed in keeping BYU
in faith with the founders,
we will do something very few
others have done. Our best
protection is to ensure that
the prerogatives of this unique
board of trustees are neither
diluted nor ignored.*

— BOYD K. PACKER



WORKING AS ONE

IN RECENT YEARS, the board of education of the Church and the board of trustees for Church colleges and universities has been the First Presidency, six members of the Quorum of the Twelve, a member of the Presiding Bishopric, and the presidents of the Relief Society and the Young Women of the Church.

I can best tell you how you are governed today, how the board of trustees functions, by explaining the principles and procedures we follow in the meetings of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. These procedures protect the work from the individual weaknesses apparent in all of us.

When a matter comes before the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in a temple meeting, one thing that is determined very quickly is whether it is of serious consequence or not. One or another of us will see in an apparently innocent proposal issues of great and lasting consequence.

It is clear from the revelations that the decisions of the presiding quorums “must be by the unanimous voice of the same. . . . Unless this is the case, their decisions are not entitled to the same blessings.”¹ In order to ensure that to be the case, matters of consequence are seldom decided in the meeting where they are proposed. And, if the proposal is a part of a larger issue, sufficient time is taken to bring us all along so that it is clear that each of us has either a clear *understanding* of the issue or, as is often the case, a very clear *feeling* about it.

The Doctrine and Covenants instructs us:

*Let not all be spokesmen at once; but let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all, and that every man may have an equal privilege.*²

It would be unthinkable to deliberately present an issue in such a way that approval depended upon how it was maneuvered through channels, who was presenting it, or who was present or absent when it was presented.

Often one or more of us is away during regular meetings. We all know that the work must proceed and will accept the judgment of our brethren. However, if a matter has been studied by one of the Quorum in more detail than by the others or he is more familiar with it either by assignment, experience, or personal interest, the matter is very often delayed until he can be in on the discussion.

And, always, if one of us cannot understand an issue or feels unsettled about it, it is held over for future discussion.

I remember occasions when a delegation was sent to the hospital to discuss with a member of the Council who was ill some urgent matter that could not be delayed but which needed that unanimous consent. There are occasions, as well, when one of us will leave the meeting temporarily to call one of our number who is abroad to get his feelings on a matter under discussion.

There is a rule we follow: A matter is not settled until there is a *minute entry* to evidence that all of the Brethren in council assembled (not just one of us, not just a committee) have come to a unity of feeling. Approval of a matter in principle is not considered authority to act until a minute entry records the action taken—usually when the minutes are approved in the next meeting.

Sometimes an afterthought keeps one of us restless over a decision. That is never dismissed lightly. It cannot be assumed that that restless spirit is not in fact the spirit of revelation.

That is how we function—in council assembled. That provides safety for the Church and a high comfort level for each of us who is personally accountable. Under the plan, men of very ordinary capacity may be guided through counsel and inspiration to accomplish extraordinary things.

Even with the best of intentions, it does not always work the way it should. Human nature may express itself on occasion, but not to the permanent injury of the work. I have a deep, even a sacred, regard

for councils; inspiration is evident in them. If ever another course has been followed, trouble has followed as surely as night follows day.

When I was first called as a General Authority, I was serving as an assistant administrator of seminaries and institutes and as a member of the administrative council of BYU. They were kind enough to have a dinner to see me off, with Elder Marion G. Romney, representing the board of education, as the speaker.

President William E. Berrett made a very brief response in which he said that Brother Tuttle (who by then was one of the Seventy) and I had something of a motto. It was "Follow the Brethren." Brother Romney responded with some humor that he was glad for that motto since I already had been given an assignment to assist him. "Now I know that Brother Packer will do everything I tell him to do."

I was asked to respond. I did not know Brother Romney very well at that time or I should not have said what I did. Nevertheless, I lived to learn that the very intimate relationship I had with him in years to come began that night when I said, "Brother Romney misunderstood! Our motto was 'Follow the *Brethren*,' not 'Follow the *brother*.'" He drew close to me thereafter because I had shown respect for a principle that was precious to him. There is only one *brother* to follow, and that is our prophet president. But even he does not act alone, for he has counselors.

These same principles that govern the function of the presiding councils of the Church work equally well in auxiliary organizations. And they apply to a combination of the two, such as in the board of trustees, where great women endowed with a special credential of insight have full voice.

As a trustee, I have, over the years, uniformly referred problems that came individually to me back to the university administration or to the board, not wanting, as a *brother*, to assume what belonged to the *Brethren*. I have generally not even asked for a report, nor have I intervened unless assigned to do so.

These checks and balances that the Lord intended to operate in His Church are, after all, the safe course. If we are to meet the great challenges now facing this university, we must respect these principles.

The Lord said, "I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine."³ And, the Lord added:

I give unto you directions how you may act before me, that it may turn to you for your salvation.

I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise.⁴

And, I repeat, "I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine."

THIS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Even with all of this, there are those who believe that priesthood and auxiliary leaders are not really qualified to govern a large university. Some have even recommended that an independent board of trustees be organized, made up of specialists or experts representing the professions, business, industry, and government, believing that others would better understand the social, philosophical, technological, and professional issues such as might relate to the administration of a university. They have suggested that such a board, provided with independent sources of finance, would protect the Brethren from their own lack of qualification.

If career or secular experience is considered to be essential, and I admit it has a place, if that is thought to be indispensable for members of a board, we are not altogether lacking in such qualification. However, we may not put quite the premium on them as others do.

There are other qualifications on which we do set higher premium. While secular achievements deserve and receive our respect, as indicated by what we have done in those fields, they are not those on which we place the *highest* value. Those of higher value relate to the qualities of character that establish a balance in education and have to do with moral stability.

We know the method of learning associated with the workings of the Spirit. We treasure the gift of the Holy Ghost that has been conferred upon every member of the Church and that can influence

others who are seeking the truth. We know the voice of the Lord when He speaks. We know the processes of revelation and how to teach them to those who want to learn. These qualifications we *do* talk about constantly and strive ever to measure up to them.

“BY STUDY AND ALSO BY FAITH”

Now listen carefully! It is crucial that you understand what I tell you now. There is danger! Church-sponsored universities are an endangered species—nearly extinct now. Recently the administration of Baylor University announced that it was severing ties with the Baptist Church, which founded it 145 years ago. Other Baptist schools—Furman, Mercer, and Wake Forest—are going through the same process. They join Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Chicago, Columbia, and a long, long list of others—other universities that have severed ties from the churches that founded and financed them.

Last month’s journal of the New York–based Institute on Religion in Public Life was devoted to the de-Christianizing of American universities. I quote from their editorial entitled “The Death of Religious Higher Education.”

The beginning of wisdom on this subject is to recognize that the road to the unhappy present was indeed paved with good intentions. To be sure, there were relevant parties who made no secret of their hostility to religion. But, for the most part, the schools that lost or are losing their sense of religious purpose sincerely sought nothing more than a greater measure of “excellence.” The problem is that they accepted uncritically definitions of excellence that were indifferent to, or even implicitly hostile to, the great concerns of religion. Few university presidents or department chairmen up and decided one day that they wanted to rid their institutions of the embarrassment of religion. It may reasonably be surmised that most believed that they were advancing a religious mission by helping their schools become like other schools—or at least more like “the best” of other schools. The language of academic excellence is powerfully seductive.⁵

If we succeed in keeping BYU in faith with the founders, we will do something very few others have done. Our best protection is to ensure that the prerogatives of this unique board of trustees are neither diluted nor ignored. Boards of education, trustees, and regents are venerable and indispensable institutions in education in the free world. They are not to be taken lightly. Theirs, and theirs alone, is the right to establish policies and set standards under which administrators, faculties, and students are to function—standards both of conduct and of excellence.

It is not unusual for highly trained professionals to smart under the necessity of working under a lay board whose members may not be as highly educated as they consider themselves to be. But the future of education in the free world, and of this unique university, depends on safeguarding the prerogatives of the boards of education.

The ties between universities and the churches that founded them have been severed because of constantly recurring contention between the spiritual and the temporal; the never-ending controversy between a narrow view of science and religion; the ancient conflict between *reason* and *revelation*.

There are two opposing convictions in the university environment. On the one hand, *seeing is believing*. On the other, *believing is seeing*. Both are true! Each in its place. The combining of the two individually or institutionally is the challenge of life. Neither influence will easily surrender to the other. They may function for a time under some sort of a truce, but the subtle discord is ever present.

They mix the way oil and water mix—only with constant shaking or stirring. When the stirring stops, they separate again. It takes a catalytic process to blend them. This requires the introduction of a third ingredient, a catalyst, which itself remains unchanged in the blending process.

Each of us must accommodate the mixture of reason and revelation in our lives. The gospel not only permits but *requires* it. An individual who concentrates on either side solely and alone will lose both balance and perspective. History confirms that the university environment always favors reason, and the workings of the Spirit are made to feel uncomfortable. I know of no examples to the contrary.

Spirituality, while consummately strong, reacts to very delicate changes in its environment. To have it present at all and to keep it in some degree of purity requires a commitment and a watch-care that can admit to no embarrassment when compared with what the scholarly world is about.

The moral and spiritual capacity of the faculty and what they shall give, and the spiritual atmosphere in which students are to learn and what they receive, will not emerge spontaneously! They happen only if they are *caused* to happen and are thereafter maintained with unwavering determination. We at BYU can be competent in both and also merit the respect of those charged with the accreditation of institutions of higher learning.

Some have envisioned BYU as a great graduate research university as opposed to an undergraduate teaching university. A few years ago the term "the Harvard of the West" was tossed about, and moves were made to recast BYU in that image. But that transformation was not initiated by the board of trustees.

Recently, lengthy discussions on the future role of BYU have been held between the board of trustees and the administration. They have led in the direction of defining BYU as an "academically selective, teaching-oriented, undergraduate university, offering both liberal arts and occupational degrees, with sufficiently strong graduate programs and research work to be a major university."⁶

When that role is finally defined, it will be determined by the board of trustees, whose fundamental credentials were not bestowed by man and whose right and responsibility it is to determine policy and "approve *all* proposed changes in basic programs and key personnel" and establish standards for both faculty and students.⁷

I spoke of the catalytic process where two seemingly antagonistic influences can merge and each give strength to the other. The essential catalyst for the fusion of reason and revelation in both student and faculty is the Spirit of Christ. He is "the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world."⁸ The blending medium is the Holy Ghost, which is conferred upon every member of the Church as a gift.

The blending of opposites is everywhere present in life. A base metal fused with a precious one can produce an alloy stronger and more resilient than either component alone.

Such a blending is seen in the priesthood of God, ordained to be conferred upon the ordinary man who must live in the base, workaday world where reason and the muscles of his body are the substance of his livelihood. The blending in of revelation will make him anything but ordinary. While such a man must remain *in* the world, he is not *of* the world.

Marriage is the wedding of opposites, the union of the man (who faces the world) with woman (who is often the more refined in spirit). When neither seeks to replace the other, the complementing differences in their nature are fostered. Then, in expressions of love, life itself is conceived, and together they receive a fullness of joy. The fusion of reason and revelation will produce men and women of imperishable worth.

On the one hand is reason: the thinking, the figuring things out, the research, the pure joy of discovery, and the academic degrees man bestows to honor that process. On the other is revelation, with the very private and very personal, the very individual confirmation of truth. The combining of them is *the* test of mortal life!

*And the spirit **and** the body are the soul of man.⁹*

For man is spirit. The elements are eternal, and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fulness of joy;

And when separated, man cannot receive a fulness of joy. . . .

The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth.

Light and truth [will] forsake that evil one. . . .

[We are] commanded . . . to bring up [our] children in light and truth.¹⁰

Now, all of that is but a preface, an introduction, to my message, which I present in two short sentences.

To you of the administration and faculty, I repeat the counsel given to Dr. Karl G. Maeser by President Brigham Young when he sent him here to start this school: “You ought not to teach even the alphabet or the multiplication tables without the Spirit of God. That is all. God bless you.”¹¹

To you students, I quote a revelation from the Lord: “As all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith.”¹²

I give to you my sure witness of the Lord and pray that He will protect this great university as together we move into the perilous years ahead. I say this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 107:27, 29.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 88:122.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 38:27.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 82:9–10.
5. “The Death of Religious Higher Education,” *First Things*, January 1991, 8.
6. Minutes of the Church Board of Education, 7 June 1990.
7. Minutes of Executive Committee, 27 April 1982.
8. Doctrine and Covenants 93:2.
9. Doctrine and Covenants 88:15; emphasis added.
10. Doctrine and Covenants 93:33–34, 36–37, 40; emphasis added.
11. Brigham Young, quoted in Reinhard Maeser, *Karl G. Maeser: A Biography by His Son* (Provo: Brigham Young University, 1928), 79.
12. Doctrine and Covenants 88:118.



“Teach Ye Diligently and My Grace Shall Attend You”

BRUCE C. HAFEN

♦ *BYU University Conference Address, August 25, 1993*

INTRODUCTION



Bruce C. Hafen was provost of Brigham Young University when he delivered this address. He spoke first about BYU as a distinctive institution that has serious dual allegiances to a “red world” of academics and a “blue world” of the Church. He then explored the challenges and blessings “of BYU’s exciting life in the land of the purple overlap” (page 54), where people take seriously both halves of the divine injunction to “seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:118).

This talk has been excerpted; for the full text, visit speeches.byu.edu/envisioning-BYU.

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— BRUCE C. HAFEN



I WELCOME THE BYU COMMUNITY to the beginning of a new school year. Today is a day for candor, and I seek a particular interest in your prayers. That viola and piano piece by Johannes Brahms, just now exquisitely performed by Clyn Barrus and Mack Wilberg, was movingly beautiful. It occurs to me that this music also introduces my central theme.

Shortly before he died, Brahms granted an intimate interview about his life and his work—on the condition that it not be published until fifty years after his death. Among many other revealing statements, Brahms described the place of heavenly inspiration in his composing. He ascribed much of his gift to direct impressions from the power of God,¹ even though he had little use for the established churches of his day. He also predicted that no atheist would ever compose great and lasting music, for lack of the essential divine spark.² But then he added that even inspired melodies would never amount to great music unless they were crafted and developed with what he called intellectual “structure.”³ I am thinking today of what inspiration and structure can do for each other.

As our new Joseph Smith Building was nearing completion a few years ago, it needed some kind of artistic capstone that captured and conveyed the crucial place of religious education at BYU. We invited Franz Johansen of our art faculty to propose possible designs for a large relief sculpture near the building’s entrance. Franz brought in several beautiful sketches of Joseph the Prophet, but something was missing: the connection between Joseph Smith and the mission of BYU. Then a prayerful search found the answer in the Lord’s revelation to Joseph:

*I give unto you a **commandment** that you shall **teach one another** the doctrine of the kingdom.*

Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you.⁴

Even more significant than this text is its larger context, to which I will return later.

We “teach one another” through both teaching and scholarship. Thus the phrase “teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you” captures BYU’s complete mission, combining the relentless pursuit of intellectual diligence with unwavering faith in the gospel and grace of Jesus Christ. Last year we reaffirmed these twin commitments in discussions among BYU faculty and administrators who sought to define the central message the university should communicate to all its audiences—trustees, the BYU community, Church members, the academic community, and the general public. With Clayne Pope as our draftsman, we determined that

*institutional compromise on either aspect of this ideal is unacceptable. Both the life of the mind and the life of the soul are valued and desirable. Neither is to be depreciated in a misguided attempt to elevate the other. Intellectual achievement does not excuse moral culpabilities. Moral rectitude does not eliminate the responsibility for intellectual effort.*⁵

This combining of spiritual and intellectual excellence tells the world, as Commissioner Henry B. Eyring has put it, that our belief in scripture and living prophets has shown us *a better way* to teach and learn.⁶ In the Lord’s words, we know a way to teach “more perfectly.”⁷

BYU’S ACADEMIC STRENGTH AND GENUINE RELIGIOSITY

Last winter I tried to articulate this two-part message while answering a question from a higher-education writer from a major American newspaper who was here doing an article on academic freedom issues at BYU. I told him of our deep commitment to intellectual inquiry, analytical rigor, and intense involvement in the national issues of the day. Then I began describing how seriously we also take our spiritual commitments—commitments not just to generic religion but to the Restoration.

He interrupted me and said, “Look—I understand what you’re talking about. In fact, if I didn’t believe that BYU is deadly serious about its devotion both to academic excellence and to Latter-day Saint religious values, I wouldn’t be here. There would be no story. It’s the combination that makes you interesting. I hope you succeed, but it won’t be easy.”

He then compared BYU to another well-known university that has historically had a religious tradition, noting that the other school has evidently decided to follow a typical pattern by emphasizing academic values over its religious values. By contrast, he noted a number of lesser-known religious colleges that relegate academic pursuits to a second-class status. In this context, BYU’s approach is both distinctive and needed.

This reporter’s reaction is typical of the way others are coming to see both BYU and the Church. They take this university very seriously. Their interest in academic freedom and related current issues here is a sign of our strength, not of our weakness. I cite the following examples of that interest not to imply that external attention matters more than substance but to illustrate my view that recent controversies on the campus really are the growing pains of an institution that is gathering momentum along a sustained and significant growth path. Consider a few headline-style examples, first regarding the Church, of which BYU is such a visible part.

The Church is now the seventh-largest religious body in America. Its population exceeds that of many nations in the world. The *New York Times* recently ran a respectful article on the Church’s growth.⁸ *Time* magazine reported last year that Utah has “the nation’s youngest, best-educated and most productive work force.”⁹ *Forbes* and *Fortune* magazines regard the Wasatch Front as the nation’s new Silicon Valley. A new book from Yale University Press, *Heaven: A History*, calls the teachings of the Church the most fully developed modern theology on the life after death, thus responding to a national hunger for heaven as a place where loved ones may reunite and be with God.¹⁰ And a recent national survey asked five thousand Book-of-the-Month Club readers what book had influenced their lives the most. The Bible was number one—and the Book of Mormon was number eight.¹¹ Only a

few years ago, the Book of Mormon would never have been on such a list.

As for the university, I believe BYU is emerging as a major university of genuine national stature. Here are just a few examples: In its number of National Merit Scholars, BYU ranks among the nation's top fifteen universities.¹² Several of our academic and professional programs are ranked as national leaders. Our faculty's output of scholarly books and articles has grown enormously, influencing thought in many disciplines. *U.S. News and World Report* tells us that the center of foreign language study in the U.S. is no longer "Cambridge or Berkeley but . . . Provo."¹³ National publications on computer-assisted language translation regard Provo as a world center. A family-law scholar from Tokyo, Japan, just made a special trip to BYU on his first visit to the U.S. because in reading the scholarship about family law emanating from this university, he had found such a refreshing contrast to the corrosive individualism of more typical modern American thought. He referred to BYU as "an oasis of hope in the land of the apocalypse."

I repeat what the visiting reporter was saying about this context: In a day when religious universities are a vanishing breed, our impressive combination of clear academic strength and genuine religiosity is an important story. The *Chronicle of Higher Education's* article on our recent tenure cases reflects this impression:

Brigham Young [University] is facing the same kinds of . . . tensions that have become common at other research universities. It isn't unusual for scholars doing work in new areas to clash with more tradition-minded colleagues—particularly in the humanities. At the same time, academic standards have been rising [at BYU]. . . .

The debate is further complicated by [BYU]'s religious identity.¹⁴

These observers understand not only our nature as a university but also the venerable place of religious universities in American history.

BYU’s growing academic strength is attracting very able students, faculty, and visitors, some of whom might not have come here in the days when the Church’s membership was less diverse and our programs were not as strong. As is often needed when a small, homogeneous group expands in both size and diversity, our new friends are entitled to know our traditional policy framework. We have thus made our customs explicit, not because we are slowing our academic growth but precisely because we are moving on with it.

Academic freedom is only one of many important and challenging issues we are clarifying as BYU moves toward the twenty-first century in an environment of complexity and public attention. These matters include our policies on admissions, the student Honor Code and student ecclesiastical endorsements, our helping more students graduate (and helping them graduate sooner), the nature of our allegiance to the Church and its values, our continuing status and promotion standards, and the balance we should strike between teaching and scholarship in our commitment to academic excellence. In so clarifying, we move together in strength, building on those twin commitments to the life of the mind and the life of the soul.

In complex organizations, periods of transition toward greater growth are often marked with the discomfort of growing pains. BYU is now moving through such a period. It is a time when the clarification of our commitments, drawing upon open campus dialogues, will empower and move our community toward the next stage in fulfilling BYU’s destiny. I have just described how I believe observers external to the campus accurately perceive the growth dimension of our growing pains. Meanwhile, because some of us internally are still working through the pain dimension of our growth, we must listen to each other carefully enough to avoid distortions that compound the pain.

The contemporary world has become increasingly complicated and combative. For instance, the Church has always had its critics, but now local news stories routinely raise Church or BYU-related controversies. In many respects, increased media interest compliments us. We have high standards, our success is attracting ever more attention, and—as I will discuss shortly—our sometimes paradoxical identity

as a Church university in a secularized, pluralistic society makes what happens here very interesting.

In this environment, we must all consider the implications of conducting BYU's business before a public audience. Sometimes our participation may unwittingly draw us into a media context that pursues agendas well beyond our own. Moreover, the public can't always hear the whole story, especially when the story is complex or has confidential elements. And, unfortunately, too many people still assume that if a story is in the newspaper, it must be not only true but important. Yet we still see stories in which unbalanced and unverified accounts on opposing sides of campus issues fuel uninformed emotions.

These factors can combine with the sheer size of the university to place our sense of community at risk, impairing our mutual communication and our mutual levels of trust. In these complicated times, some hammer others in intolerant self-righteousness, and that doesn't help us. Some try to go public when they feel they are not listened to, and that doesn't help us. Still others remain silent when they need to reach out in loving and private willingness to offer suggestions—after understanding another's point of view. In these complicated times, may we be as candid yet as kind as Moroni and Pahoran. Even when some think others are sitting “upon [their] thrones in a state of thoughtless stupor,”¹⁵ may we have Pahoran's empathy and charity: “In your epistle you have censured me, but . . . I am not angry, but do rejoice in the greatness of your heart.”¹⁶ In that willing spirit, I pledge the administration's renewed desire to be accessible and to listen.

THE UNIVERSITY'S DUAL HERITAGE

Meanwhile the BYU community is engaged in a large, diverse, and incredibly successful educational enterprise, and a new school year is a good time to get on with that enterprise. To that end, I offer a simple model intended to give some perspective both to recent events and to our more fundamental tasks of teaching, learning, and scholarship. The university's dual heritage gives us membership in and allegiance to two different worlds: the world of higher education and the world of the Church.

Imagine two circles, side by side, representing those two worlds. Color the higher-education circle red and color the Church circle blue. Bring the two circles toward each other until they overlap somewhat. Color the overlap area purple—the color resulting from mixing blue and red. BYU belongs in the purple overlap area with its dual nature: it is genuinely part of the Church yet genuinely also part of American higher education, inevitably affected by what happens in either world. In this unique domain, we have found a more perfect way to teach and learn.

Yet some people in the red world of education look at a purple BYU and say, “Hey, you’re not red like us, you strange duck!” And some people in the blue world of the Church say, “Hey, you’re not blue like us, you strange duck!” This can give BYU people feelings of tension—if not an identity crisis—despite being part of the great purple tradition of religious higher education. But that tension and our unique identity are the source of our greatest contributions to both the red and blue worlds, and our ability to contribute is improved every time someone in either of those worlds better understands how our purple nature can bless them in ways that a simple blue or a simple red entity never could. Consider some illustrations of how belonging to each world affects us.

The Red World of Higher Education

When I refer to the world of education, I mean the ideal of traditional higher education that has made American colleges and universities the world’s finest. Not everything about U.S. higher education today is healthy, and BYU’s membership in the community of universities does not mean we uncritically accept every new academic trend or value. But in the simplest, most general sense, BYU is clearly a player on the field of higher education. It thus differs in certain respects from other agencies sponsored by the Church, which explains our direct reporting line to a distinct board of trustees.

Our sponsorship and our educational mission do make us accountable first of all to the Church, and if we ever have a truly irreconcilable conflict between higher education and the Church, we will choose the Church. But we are also accountable in very serious ways

to accrediting bodies, government agencies, academic disciplines, professions, and the larger academic community. Each of us at BYU is also accountable to the public. The day the Church created BYU as a serious university, it made a substantial contribution to *the public interest*. We are obliged to prepare our students to function successfully in that public world as well as in their private worlds of family and church. BYU will never be “of the [public] world,”¹⁷ but it is unavoidably and wholeheartedly *in* that world.

In this spirit, I salute—and cheer for—the growing number of BYU faculty and administrators who are major contributors to their academic and professional fields. Our scholars, artists, and researchers are making a difference in a society that sorely needs their inspired and creative genius. In ways that also breathe quality and excitement into our basic teaching mission, BYU faculty are making scientific and theoretical breakthroughs, discovering social insights, and exquisitely performing creative works—often at world-class levels. Our membership in the community of universities gives us not only the opportunity but the obligation to keep doing this. As Oliver Wendell Holmes said, “It is required of [us] that [we] should share the passion and action of [our] time at peril of being judged not to have lived.”¹⁸ In this demanding sense, BYU must be judged to have lived.

In addition, because of our ties to this red educational world, we must be cautious about the way we integrate our academic disciplines with the gospel. As I discussed a year ago, the sacred map of the universe is large enough to encompass the secular map, but the secular map is too small to include the sacred map.¹⁹ This perspective encourages us to have a sacred—as opposed to a profane—perspective on the whole of life. But this does not mean we *exclude* secular maps; we just see them in perspective. This understanding can also inform us when some value-laden premise from the red world is simply wrong. But that red world still offers much that is “lovely, . . . of good report [and] praiseworthy.”²⁰

Time precludes our exploring all the implications of our membership in the world of higher education, but we must at least note one more: BYU is unavoidably affected by—and must therefore come to terms with—developments in the academic disciplines. I

note especially the newly radicalized disciplines with which all major universities are now concerned. For example, the critical legal studies movement in the law schools, which partakes of several postmodernist elements, has challenged not only the very foundations of legal education and law practice but the very idea of a system of law. This movement asserts that law has no objective legitimacy and is simply a euphemism for power. Similar claims in the humanities and elsewhere challenge every discipline they touch.

Many of these arguments have value, forcing us to rethink prevailing paradigms and helping to unmask remaining pockets of discrimination and unfairness. But while some radical advocates have staked claims to new theoretical constructs, they also convey anti-intellectual overtones when they rely on simplistic conspiracy theories urged by "true believers" who refuse to deal rationally with the arguments against their positions. Some of these radicals are waging war against American universities, uprooting established disciplines and turning departments on many campuses into what one writer called "islands of repression in a sea of freedom."²¹

Some proponents of change put power-oriented "activism" ahead of rational discourse in their teaching and scholarship, a step that raises troubling questions for those who thought universities were designed to liberate us from making decisions in the streets. And, as New York University's Joseph S. Salemi wrote, "Academic freedom [to some of these people] means [their] freedom to be hired and tenured without the inconvenience of competition or the necessity of producing real scholarly work."²²

The new movements are asking large and searching questions, and we must not dismiss them out of hand. We must maintain open minds and a willingness to debate the issues honestly, that we may be among the good universities that thoughtfully distinguish the legitimate from the illegitimate arguments in this area. We must also struggle conscientiously to understand the place of activist teaching and scholarship that arguably rejects established disciplines and methodologies. Debate on such questions is terribly important in a free society. The question for *universities* is *how* this debate should occur in an academic journal or in the captive audience of a classroom, as

distinguished from how it occurs in forums outside the academy. Our judgments about that question will affect our future understanding of what a university is.

As we encounter this kind of activism, we must help our friends in the blue world of the Church to understand that not everything about the trend is bad. Moreover, the noisy debates the trend fosters can, if conducted civilly, be a sign of educational health, not a sign that BYU is falling apart. Yet we also belong to that Church world; therefore, our faculty who accept activist premises must not take lightly our need for the understanding and support of mainstream Church members.

The Blue World of Religion

Consider now some implications of BYU's belonging to the blue world. First, let it be clear that we do not dilute everything blue with a dose of red. The doctrines of the Restoration inform and shape us in utterly undiluted ways. In that sense and in other ways, my three-colored metaphor, like most metaphors, is obviously subject to important qualifications.

As we add organizational factors to doctrinal ones, our Church sponsorship is still the source of our greatest strength, even if it seems from a red-world perspective to be our greatest vulnerability. To be bluntly practical about it, compare BYU's circumstances with those at other universities. I recently heard a professor from the University of Virginia report his findings from a survey of leaders in a large sample of American universities. As I share their five greatest worries, in order of importance, ask yourself how worried we are at BYU about these issues: (1) financing university operations, (2) attracting enough students to maintain enrollments, (3) financial support for facilities and technology, (4) financial support to maintain educational quality, and (5) strengthening the curriculum. Of course BYU has challenges, including some financial ones. But the Church's support for BYU is almost unbelievable by higher-education standards. Our basic operations are so well funded and we have so many students wanting to enroll that we can hardly relate to most current worries at other universities.

At the same time, our blue background gives our educational mission a distinctive hue. As President Spencer W. Kimball said in his celebrated second-century address, “This university is not of the world any more than the Church is of the world, and it must not be made over in the image of the world.”²³ He said, “I hope none will presume on the prerogatives of the prophets of God to set the basic direction for this university.”²⁴ Yet he also urged BYU to “tower above other universities,”²⁵ because the First Presidency “expect[s] ([they] do not simply hope) that Brigham Young University will ‘become a leader among the great universities of the world.’”²⁶ A few among those who watch us may find that even this pattern is too blue to suit them. But we have yet to see their reservations impose costs on BYU that even approach the benefits of our Church sponsorship—especially because those benefits are so much more than merely financial benefits.

Happily, as President Kimball’s language suggests, our board of trustees is deeply committed to our basic educational and scholarly interests. We may occasionally see an exceptional case in which the disproportionate visibility of a BYU person who appears to challenge board direction causes discomfort. But I find over and over again that our board enthusiastically supports and even admires our faculty, our staff, and our students. As President Gordon B. Hinckley said last fall:

Never in the history of this institution has there been a faculty better qualified professionally nor one more loyal and dedicated to the standards of its sponsoring institution. . . .

*This is a world-class university, a great temple of learning.*²⁷

We should read that talk often because it came from President Hinckley’s heart and I believe it speaks for the entire board of trustees.

Our belonging to the Church world liberates rather than confines us in our multitude of campus activities. In nearly all matters of hiring, curriculum, academic programs, research projects and methods, organizational matters, and social activities, authorized faculty or staff personnel have enormous personal discretion. We must always strive for mature professionalism, but because of the religious worldview held by virtually all BYU people, Church values obviously shape our

discretionary judgments in appropriate ways—not because we *have* to follow Church values but because we *get* to follow them. Sometimes the blue world defines us in ways that people in the red world can't understand, but those limits do what the Lord's discipline always does—they enable *greater*, not lesser, educational perfection than the red world knows.

In an educational world that thrives on rationality, it helps us that we subscribe to what Elder John A. Widtsoe called “a rational theology.”²⁸ But we live also by faith, at times accepting the counsel of the Lord and His servants without a complete rationale. For instance, we have recently lived through a fascinating culture change on the social acceptability of tobacco smoke. I have wondered why the Lord didn't just tell us in the 89th section of the Doctrine and Covenants about the risks of lung cancer. He just gave His conclusions and a promise—no more rationale than that tobacco “is not good for man.”²⁹

Thus has the Lord always worked. There is an entire theology explaining why it is better for our spiritual development when we freely choose to “be believing”³⁰ rather than waiting until we are compelled—even by scientific evidence—to believe. That is not easy for us university types, who were trained in rational skepticism. But our experience in the blue world constantly verifies, like the tobacco example, why the Lord warned the Saints in the very next section:

*And all they who receive the oracles of God, let them beware how they hold them lest they are accounted as a light thing, and are brought under condemnation thereby, and stumble and fall when the storms descend, and the winds blow, and the rains descend, and beat upon their house.*³¹

A BYU friend of mine believes that now that the world has discovered how reasonable it is to avoid smoking, the Lord will find some test other than the Word of Wisdom to let us show that our allegiance to Him is grounded in faith, not merely in threats that are obvious to everyone. (On hearing this, another friend said, “I hope it isn't ice cream! That would *really* test this people.”)

Another effect of our belonging to the Church world is that students, parents, and other Church members understandably link what happens at BYU to the Church’s sponsorship. This linkage is not always easy to apply at a strong university in a free society because we seek to provide a rich educational experience that exposes our students to a wide array of ideas and approaches. Nonetheless, Church members and leaders are entitled to expect that our classes, programs, and performances are consistent with Church aspirations. As with any organization whose sponsorship implies some level of support, BYU is thus appropriately concerned with the “fit” between the university’s distinctive mission and those who occupy our platforms.

As we work through the overlaps between the Church world and the educational world, Henry B. Eyring, our commissioner of education, and Elder Neal A. Maxwell, who now chairs the executive committee of our board, have blessed us immeasurably in helping to secure effective zones of governance between the board and the university. We have now adopted, for example, a jurisdictional understanding that defines the separate functions of ecclesiastical and educational channels consistently with our academic freedom statement so that issues arising only because of one’s BYU personnel status will be handled by the university. We have also adopted on the campus a new student/faculty grievance policy that directs concerned students first to faculty members, then to department chairs, deans, and the administration. When student concerns go outside this process, we should channel them back to it.

So at BYU we live in two worlds—the red world of higher education and the blue world of the Church. I realize that some people see red when they think BYU should look blue, and other people turn blue when they think BYU should look red. I also realize that, as this model reveals, BYU personnel are the only people in the world who can be equally vilified by their Latter-day Saint and non-Latter-day Saint relatives at the same family reunion. Still I plead with those who see mostly one or the other of these worlds to experience the other world more fully. We all work within a complex sphere, even though some departments naturally deal more with one color than another. It hurts us and drives the Lord’s Spirit from our midst when some

who think mostly in either red or blue terms sit in harsh judgment on those who think mostly in terms of the other color.

THOUGHTS ON QUALITY OF WORK

Against the background of this incomplete sketch of BYU's exciting life in the land of the purple overlap, I wish to mention briefly the general quality of our work.

First, I plead for excellence and quality in all we do here. Our involvement in two worlds gives us twice as many reasons to do our best. For example, knowing that BYU's work is part of God's kingdom lets us view whatever we do as a religious offering, whether that work is done by BYU cooks, custodians, carpenters, or clerks. As C. S. Lewis said, whether work is done by a Beethoven or a boot-black, it becomes holy on the same condition: whether it is done for the glory of God.³² I am struck by the lesson that the parents of both President David O. McKay and President Spencer W. Kimball taught them as young boys when paying their tithing in kind. For the McKays, this meant their best crop of hay.³³ For the Kimballs, one of every ten eggs became part of "the tithing eggs."³⁴

Could we thus think of our daily labor—whether in staff support, teaching, or scholarship—as a consecration of our best personal harvest? Knowing that the world regards our work as representing BYU and its sponsoring Church should bring out the very best that is in us. When it does, as Paul Cox put it, the gospel is

*not a filter but a catalyst that requires me to act on my knowledge to confront directly the issues and problems that affect all of mankind. Rising violence, serious disease, widespread poverty, and worldwide environmental degradation are moral and spiritual issues that I, as a follower of Christ, am required to face. Rather than aspire to higher position, each of us should aspire to higher performance.*³⁵

We must also insist on both rigorous analysis and impeccable judgment in doing work that integrates the gospel with academic disciplines. When such work is poorly done, it can reflect negatively on

the Church, either because it just isn't very careful work or because it may appear to judge the Church by the limited lights of the academic discipline alone. Let us not stretch unwisely, therefore, to include Church issues in our work. But let us also avoid the extreme of believing that being independent of or critical of the Church is the best evidence of educational quality. Our dual commitment asks for mutually reinforcing, not mutually exclusive, forms of excellence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE SPIRIT

I return now to the Doctrine and Covenants for a final perspective. We are approaching the twenty-first century. The Church will grow so rapidly in the coming years that we must rethink why BYU exists. During earlier times, our model was the Church academies—colleges that educated all the youth of Zion who chose to attend. But in the approaching new century, when the Church can have only a few universities, the academy model may no longer fit as well. BYU must somehow become a university that serves the international Church while enrolling only a small fraction of its members. What kind of place must this be to help build the worldwide Zion? The most obvious answer to that question is that this must be a truly excellent university, as President Kimball told us the First Presidency so fully expects. Mediocrity will not advance the reputation and the cause of Zion across the globe.

The 88th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, first given to guide the Saints who were building Zion in 1832, is still the best perspective on building Zion with a more perfect form of excellence. It speaks first of the Light of Christ, which enlightens every person and fills every space.³⁶ That light, said Parley P. Pratt, is the source of “instinct in animal life, reason in man, [and] vision in the Prophets.”³⁷ It is the light of human conscience and of natural laws in the universe. If we live in the light, we may grow in the light. Those who leave the light will become without feeling or conscience, for they “[seek] to become a law unto [themselves], and [will] to abide in sin.”³⁸

But for those who live in the light, section 88 unfolds an astonishing pattern of personal progression. As we grow in understanding and obedience, we receive more light. This includes receiving the promptings of the Holy Ghost, then the gift of the Holy Ghost, then ratification by the Holy Spirit of Promise.³⁹ As the light increases, our calling and election is made sure,⁴⁰ which prepares us, said Joseph Smith, to receive in this life the Second Comforter—the presence of Christ.⁴¹ And finally comes glorious sanctification in the Father’s holy presence. So it is that “he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day.”⁴²

We at BYU have chosen education. We love to learn. We seek to *comprehend* the mysteries of life. Then what more stirring promise could fill our ears than the following verses, which describe the culmination of the fullness of light?

And if your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you; and that body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things.

*Therefore, sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God, and the days will come that you shall see him; for he will unveil his face unto you, and it shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will.*⁴³

Now consider the verses that follow this promise. The Lord speaks of a solemn assembly in which the laborers for Zion may purify themselves so that He by His atoning power may make them clean. He testifies of that cleansing power and asks the laborers to fast and pray. It is from *this* stirring train of thought that these words then flow:

And I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom.

Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, . . . in doctrine, . . .

Of things both in heaven and in the earth, . . . things which have been, things which are. . .

*. . . Seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith.*⁴⁴

These words and those that surround them are the most celebrated words in all scripture on the subject of teaching and learning—the most quoted at BYU gatherings. Now what are these verses doing in section 88, mixed with the promises of sanctification and being filled with light? Could it possibly be that if our teaching is diligent enough and if our eyes really are single to God’s glory, the grace of the holy Atonement will attend us? What is the connection between comprehending and learning and receiving more light? What is “an eye single to the glory of God”?⁴⁵ What must we do to invite this understanding into our lives and the lives of our students? Given such a vision, what more promising life could there be than being a teacher and a learner at BYU?

Seeking the answers to these questions is the quest of a lifetime. Franz Johansen lifts my eyes to look for the answers with the powerful lines of grace and light that he carved streaming from heaven in the new relief sculpture at the Joseph Smith Building. Richard H. Cracroft lifted my heart to feel some of the answers when he so gently reminded us at this summer’s devotional how the Lord stretches forth His finger to touch and change our lives in a multitude of inef-fable but undeniable interventions of the Spirit. Richard spoke much of “hosanna moments” in the mission field, but he also moved me to remember that that same Spirit fills this campus too.⁴⁶ Every day here, many, many times, unknown to the newspapers, that Spirit “shall enlighten your mind [and] fill your soul with joy.”⁴⁷ We all knew what Richard was talking about. We have felt it. We must feel it often and—someday—always. It is the Spirit of section 88, seeking to grow “brighter and brighter until the perfect day.” By that light and by our diligence, we have found a better way to teach and learn.

They who seek to build Zion have always known about the growing pains and the cloudy days that may briefly hide the light. But the builders of Zion always keep moving and growing, guided by the Spirit of section 88, which flows freshly from the heavens, flooding our earth every day with its clear light. That light shines nowhere more brightly than it does on these precious acres we call the BYU campus. May we lift our eyes to the light, cleanse ourselves, and teach with all diligence, and the Lord’s grace will attend us.

NOTES

1. See Johannes Brahms, quoted in Arthur M. Abell, *Talks with Great Composers* (London: Spiritualist Press, 1955), 11.
2. See Brahms, quoted in Abell, *Talks with Great Composers*, 21, 26.
3. Brahms, quoted in Abell, *Talks with Great Composers*, 62.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 88:77–78; emphasis added.
5. Clayne Pope, from an internal memo regarding an informal discussion the BYU administration was having at the time.
6. See, for example, Henry B. Eyring, “Child of Promise,” BYU devotional address, 4 May 1986.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 88:78.
8. See Ari L. Goldman, “Mormon Tradition and Zeal Inspire Growth in Northeast,” Metro Report, *New York Times*, 7 February 1993, 35, 41.
9. Sally B. Donnelly, “Mixing Business and Faith,” *Time*, 29 July 1991, 22.
10. See Colleen McDannell and Bernhard Lang, *Heaven: A History* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1988), 309–21.
11. See Book-of-the-Month Club and Library of Congress Center for the Book, Survey of Lifetime Reading Habits (1991); referenced in Esther B. Fein, “Influential Book,” Book Notes, *New York Times*, 20 November 1991, C26; and “Bible Ranks 1 of Books That Changed Lives,” *LA Times*, 2 December 1991.
12. See “BYU’s Merit Scholars in the Top 10,” *Church News*, 2 May 1992.
13. James Fallows, “The World Beyond Salt Lake City,” *U.S. News and World Report*, 2 May 1988, 67.
14. Carolyn J. Mooney, “Conservative Brigham Young U. Contends with Small but Growing Movement for Change,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 30 June 1993, A14.
15. Alma 60:7.
16. Alma 61:9.
17. John 17:16; emphasis added.
18. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Memorial Day address, 30 May 1884, Keene, New Hampshire; in *Speeches by Oliver Wendell Holmes* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1934), 3.
19. See Bruce C. Hafen, “The Dream Is Ours to Fulfill,” BYU annual university conference address, 25 August 1992.
20. Articles of Faith 1:13.
21. Abigail Thernstrom, quoted in Chester E. Finn Jr., “The Campus: ‘An Island of Repression in a Sea of Freedom,’” *Commentary*, September 1989, 23; and in Dinesh D’Souza, *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus* (New York: Free Press, 1991), 227.
22. From to the author’s personal notes.

23. Spencer W. Kimball, “The Second Century of Brigham Young University,” BYU devotional address, 10 October 1975.
24. Kimball, “Second Century.”
25. Kimball, “Second Century.”
26. Kimball, “Second Century”; quoting Harold B. Lee, “Be Loyal to the Royal Within You,” BYU devotional address, 11 September 1973.
27. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Trust and Accountability,” BYU devotional address, 13 October 1992.
28. See John A. Widtsoe, *Rational Theology: As Taught by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* ([Salt Lake City]: General Priesthood Committee, 1915).
29. Doctrine and Covenants 89:8.
30. Mormon 9:27; Doctrine and Covenants 90:24.
31. Doctrine and Covenants 90:5.
32. See C. S. Lewis, “Learning in War-Time,” in *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (New York: Macmillan, 1949), 48–49.
33. See David O. McKay, *Cherished Experiences from the Writings of President David O. McKay*, comp. Clare Middlemiss (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1955), 19.
34. Edward L. Kimball and Andrew E. Kimball Jr., *Spencer W. Kimball: Twelfth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1977), 31; and Spencer W. Kimball, “First Presidency Messages: He Did It with All His Heart, and Prospered,” *Ensign*, March 1981.
35. From the author’s personal notes.
36. See Doctrine and Covenants 88:6–13.
37. Parley P. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology* (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855), 41.
38. Doctrine and Covenants 88:35.
39. See Doctrine and Covenants 88:3.
40. See Doctrine and Covenants 88:4; see also Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1902–32), 3:380 (27 June 1839).
41. See Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 3:381 (27 June 1839).
42. Doctrine and Covenants 50:24.
43. Doctrine and Covenants 88:67–68.
44. Doctrine and Covenants 88:77–79, 118.
45. Doctrine and Covenants 4:5; 82:19; see also Doctrine and Covenants 88:67; Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 6:22; Luke 11:34; 3 Nephi 13:22.
46. Richard H. Cracroft, “‘We’ll Sing and We’ll Shout’: A Mantic Celebration of the Holy Spirit,” BYU devotional address, 29 June 1993.
47. Doctrine and Covenants 11:13.



Lift Up Thine Eyes to the Mountains

KRISTINE HANSEN

♦ *BYU Devotional Address, July 3, 2001*

INTRODUCTION



Kristine Hansen was a professor of English and associate dean of Honors and General Education when she delivered this inspiring devotional on BYU's aims. She reflected deeply and lucidly on each aim, which she compared to facets of a towering mountain, ultimately encouraging faculty, staff, and students to unite in their efforts to live the aims and ascend together as they help BYU fulfill its divine destiny. Although her remarks are primarily addressed to students, they can and should be internalized by all who come to work, study, or serve at the university.

*There are inspiring things
our Father in Heaven wants
to show us..., yet we are so
absorbed in trivial, worldly
interests that we sometimes
turn our backs to the thrilling
views of eternity that are
available if we would only
lift up our eyes and see.*

—KRISTINE HANSEN



I AM HUMBLLED by the invitation to speak today. As I have prepared my remarks, I have had particularly in mind the nine hundred new freshmen who arrived on campus less than two weeks ago. The rest of you will, I hope, find something of value in what I say, but I especially pray that I can help the youngest students among us understand some of the unique opportunities that lie before them.

I have entitled my remarks “Lift Up Thine Eyes to the Mountains.” This title was inspired by an experience I had two years ago. I like to vacation in the mountains, yet the summer of 1999 was the first time I had ever traveled to nearby Wyoming to visit the Grand Tetons. A friend and I arrived at the national park in the late afternoon. As we drove along the park road to get closer to those majestic peaks, we noticed an area where we could pull off and read signs telling us the names and geologic history of the mountains. As we stood outside the car, drinking in the beauty of the scene, a van pulled off the road and parked beside our car, and a couple probably in their early forties got out to admire the mountains too.

I noticed that the license plate on their van indicated they were from one of the flat midwestern states, and I thought perhaps the mountains would be especially awe-inspiring to them. As I turned to go back to the car, I noticed in the rear of their van two teenaged boys—presumably the sons of this couple—seated with their backs to the Grand Tetons and showing absolutely no interest in looking at them. One boy had headphones on and his eyes shut, apparently caught up in whatever he was listening to. The other had his nose in a magazine, doggedly reading, seemingly oblivious to the beauty that surrounded him.

Now I don’t know why these two boys were ignoring the view; maybe it was the last day of their trip and they had already seen enough. But, unfairly or not, I imagined that they had come on

vacation at their parents' insistence, and now, just to show how cool they were, they were refusing to be impressed by the sights their parents had brought them to see.

As I drove away from this family, I thought that many of us often behave in the way these boys did: There are inspiring things our Father in Heaven wants to show us and wonderful experiences He wants to give us, yet we are so absorbed in trivial, worldly interests that we sometimes turn our backs to the thrilling views of eternity that are available if we would only lift up our eyes and see.

Today my desire is to help us all lift up our eyes and see the heights to which we may aspire if we will take full advantage of the opportunities offered us here. Brigham Young University exists in large part to help The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints fulfill its mission. The mission of the university "is to assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life."¹ The mission statement declares that "all students at BYU should be taught the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Any education is inadequate which does not emphasize that His is the only name given under heaven whereby mankind can be saved."² As President Spencer W. Kimball said in a 1967 address, BYU should provide "education for eternity." The faculty here, he stated, have "a double heritage" and a double responsibility to preserve and teach not only the knowledge of men but "the revealed truths sent from heaven."³

Included with the mission statement are the Aims of a BYU Education, approved by the board of trustees in 1995. "A BYU education should be (1) spiritually strengthening, (2) intellectually enlarging, and (3) character building, leading to (4) lifelong learning and service."⁴ We faculty members are frequently encouraged to read the aims and to incorporate the four aims into our teaching. Yet I wonder how often students take the time to read and ponder the words that elaborate on the four aims. I hope that you will read the complete statement of the mission and aims. I recommend you read them at least once a semester to remind yourself of the higher goals you should have beyond merely passing courses and accumulating credits for graduation.

To me, each of these aims is like a mountain peak—or, more accurately, each is like a facet of a single towering mountain that we are invited not only to look at but to climb. In many ways we faculty can only do like the parents in the story I related. We can bring you students to the mountain, we can encourage you, and we can try to model the behavior that we hope you will choose. But you must make the effort to lift up your eyes and then to scale the peak through your diligence. This university will achieve its divine destiny only as faculty, staff, and students unite and help each other in the climb upward.

I wish to speak about each of the four aims, suggesting things that may help us ascend together. I propose that in striving to achieve the aims of a BYU education, you will simultaneously be advancing in your quest for perfection and eternal life—a quest that we must always remember is made possible only through the love and the Atonement of the Savior.

BUILDING CHARACTER

I will start with the third aim of “character building” for reasons that I think will become clear. For centuries the ultimate goal of education in Western civilization was the formation of students’ character. True, in each period of the past, students were taught what was known in every branch of learning. But they were taught such things as oratory, languages, philosophy, literature, music, and mathematics to increase their wisdom and judgment and to enable them to serve their societies. Education was to engender virtue, and the morality of students was the constant concern of most teachers from ancient Greece through the first hundred-plus years of the United States. In this country up until about 1890, the last course that students took at college was moral philosophy, a course considered so important it was usually taught by the college president.⁵ Very few universities now attempt anything in the way of molding students’ character. Most have capitulated to the relatively recent belief that the goal of higher education is to specialize in some area of learning so that one has the credentials to get a job and earn money—preferably lots of it.

I hope you will be grateful that one of the aims of BYU is not to prepare you to become wealthy but to build your character. President Kimball taught that BYU

*has no justification for its existence unless it builds character, creates and develops faith, and makes men and women of strength and courage, fortitude, and service. . . . It is not justified on an academic basis only.*⁶

How can your experience at BYU help you develop the kind of Christlike character the aims document describes? Let me suggest a few things to consider.

Your character is formed by the things you think about, the daily decisions you make, and the actions that follow. How true are the words of this old saying:

*Sow a thought, and you reap an act;
Sow an act, and you reap a habit;
Sow a habit, and you reap a character;
Sow a character, and you reap a destiny.*

How you choose to use your time, treat your family, interact with your friends and roommates, serve your employer, do your homework, fulfill your Church callings—all of these decisions and actions will contribute to your character. The Honor Code aims to instill in us “those moral virtues encompassed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.”⁷ If you will follow both the spirit and the letter of the Honor Code, you will develop traits of honesty, integrity, humility, and benevolence that will make you the kind of person who is sought after as a friend, an employee, and a spouse.

Your pledging to obey the Honor Code is an act of no small importance. Too many people today too easily break their promises and set aside commitments when it is no longer convenient to honor them. Such people diminish their own character and demonstrate the truth of the words spoken by Sir Thomas More in Robert Bolt’s play *A Man for All Seasons*. In this play, More refuses to swear to the Act of

Succession because he cannot in good conscience approve of some of King Henry VIII's actions. When More is in danger of losing his life because of his refusal, his daughter Margaret urges him to swear the oath outwardly but in his heart to "think otherwise."⁸

More replies, "What is an oath then but words we say to God? . . . When a man takes an oath, . . . he's holding his own self in his own hands. Like water. And if he opens his fingers *then*—he needn't hope to find himself again."⁹

To make any commitment and then violate your promise is to let your character dribble away like water between your fingers. Honor the commitments you have made to parents, friends, roommates, teachers, employers, your bishop, and the Lord. Your character will grow more firm and steady each time you set aside your desire to do what is convenient and instead do what is right.

Let me suggest something else you might consider as you think about character development. In the October 2000 general conference of the Church, President Boyd K. Packer told of receiving his patriarchal blessing at the age of eighteen after he had entered military service. The patriarch told Brother Packer, "Guard and protect [your body]—take nothing into it that shall harm the organs thereof because it is sacred. It is the instrument of your mind and the foundation of your character." President Packer reiterated those words to all of us: "Your body really *is* the instrument of your mind and the foundation of your character."¹⁰

I think of these words now as I walk across campus and pass students who have disabilities. Coping with blindness, deafness, motor impairments, and other challenges, these students have not allowed less-than-perfect bodies to stop them from seizing the opportunity to improve their minds. They have no doubt faced barriers and the temptation to settle for something less than a college education. But in overcoming adversity, they have built great strength of character. Their bodies—perhaps *because* of their disabilities—have become the foundation of characters marked by courage and persistence.

It is likewise with those who battle invisible challenges of chronic illness or mental and emotional conditions. They, too, can forge a sterling character in the fire of adversity. The same can be true for all.

If we realize that our body is a great gift from God and our mortal parents, and if we treat that body with wisdom and respect, we can all lay the foundation for a strong character.

All around us today we see two extremes where the body is concerned. At one extreme are those who seem to hate their bodies, scarring and defacing them with tattoos and multiple piercings. They use drugs and other substances that weaken and addict their bodies. To me, such people seem to have tormented, unhappy characters. At the other extreme are those who are far too vain about their bodies. They are much too preoccupied with appearance. Goaded by media images of models and movie stars, they try to shape their bodies into unrealistic ideals through sometimes life-threatening practices. They spend excessively on fashionable clothing and myriad other products to use in or on the body. Trying to meet the world's narrow, shallow, and ever-changing standard of beauty, they may neglect to develop deeper, more lasting character traits.

Such preoccupation with appearance calls to mind the words of Moroni, who, when he saw our day in vision, wrote this as he finished the record of his father, Mormon:

And I know that ye do walk in the pride of your hearts; and there are none save a few only who do not lift themselves up in the pride of their hearts, unto the wearing of very fine apparel. . . .

For behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel . . . more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted.¹¹

Then Moroni asked:

Why do ye adorn yourselves with that which hath no life, and yet suffer the hungry, and the needy, and the naked, and the sick and the afflicted to pass by you, and notice them not?¹²

Moroni suggested an answer to his own question: People do these things for “the praise of the world”¹³; they esteem being in fashion

and having peer approval more than they esteem their fellowmen and the approbation of God.

In contrast to the extremes, the gospel teaches us to make our bodies attractive by keeping them clean, neatly groomed, and modestly clothed and to discipline them by controlling our physical appetites. May I suggest that following a daily regimen that includes sufficient sleep, exercise, a healthy diet, and staying clean and well-groomed can in itself contribute to the development of character? Keeping up such discipline can present a challenge to busy students—or anyone else. Faced with homework, tests, and other responsibilities, it is easy to excuse ourselves for lapses in a healthy routine by insisting we are just too busy. But if we persist in such an unwise course for very long, we find ourselves fatigued, sick, or depressed, unable to accomplish the physical and mental work we need to do.

Remember the remarkable promise given at the end of the Word of Wisdom:

*And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings,
walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in
their navel and marrow to their bones;*

*And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even
hidden treasures;*

And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint.¹⁴

Notice that treasures of wisdom and knowledge are promised to those who heed the commandments and the laws of physical health. As President Packer said, “Your body really *is* the instrument of your mind.”

A “SPIRITUALLY STRENGTHENING” AND “INTELLECTUALLY ENLARGING” EDUCATION

I want to speak about the first and second aims of a BYU education—to “be spiritually strengthening” and “intellectually enlarging”—together. As far as I can tell, when these two activities are correctly understood, you can’t do one without the other. I have heard some

people speak of the intellect and the spirit as if they were diametrically opposed, warning that those who engage deeply in intellectual pursuits will lose their testimonies. However, sociologists who have studied members of our church have concluded the opposite: higher levels of education are strongly correlated with indicators of faithfulness, such as prayer and scripture study, tithing, missionary service, and temple marriage.¹⁵ This is not to say that one must have diplomas and degrees to be a stalwart member of the Church. Some of the greatest spiritual giants in my life had little formal education. But I propose that those who have attained a high degree of spirituality are also those whose minds are most alive to the wonders of creation and the noblest achievements of the human race. I submit that intellectual and spiritual pursuits not only *can* but *should* be harmonized so that the most effective learning will take place, as well as the learning that will most contribute to our spiritual safety.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught:

*We consider that God has created man with a mind capable of instruction, and a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from heaven to the intellect; and that the nearer [a] man approaches perfection, the clearer are his views, and the greater his enjoyments, till he has overcome the evils of his life and lost every desire for sin.*¹⁶

This statement suggests that the intellect and the spirit are developed simultaneously and that the greater one grows in spiritual stature, the greater one will grow in intellectual ability as well. Brigham Young described the scope of our religion thus: “It matters not what the subject be, if it tends to improve the mind, exalt the feelings, and enlarge the capacity. The truth that is in all the arts and sciences forms a part of our religion.”¹⁷

These familiar verses from the Doctrine and Covenants sum up well the encompassing nature of what the Lord expects us to teach and learn:

Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand;

Of things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms.¹⁸

This scripture describes well the education we try to give students at BYU. In your religion courses you will “be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God.” I hope you will not be dismayed when your religion professors are more rigorous and demanding than the typical Sunday School teacher. The gospel is a vast topic, and it can’t be learned casually. In addition to studying the gospel, this scripture implies we should study everything from astronomy to zoology—every field of learning that belongs to this earth.

We often stop quoting the verses from section 88 at this point, but let us read the next verse, which explains *why* we should learn about so many things:

That ye may be prepared in all things when I [the Lord] shall send you again to magnify the calling whereunto I have called you, and the mission with which I have commissioned you.¹⁹

This scripture states quite simply that the education we gain in the gospel and other fields is to prepare us for the callings that the Lord will give us. I think we could do no better than to look at the current leaders of the Church to see excellent examples of people who magnify their callings precisely because they blend profound knowledge and testimonies of the gospel with broad learning and experience in various professions. For example, President Gordon B. Hinckley’s experience with and understanding of the mass media have enabled

him to represent the Church in a positive light to millions who are not members. I could multiply examples, but the point is clear: the Lord and His Church need people who have both spiritual understanding and excellent educational preparation. We don't know what callings may yet come to us, but we should consider every subject we study as part of our preparation.

Thus it is important to approach our studies with an inquiring and enthusiastic attitude. Occasionally students will ask why so many courses are required in general education. Some have even seriously suggested that if they already know what they want to major in, they shouldn't be required to take general education. Allow me to let Albert Einstein and then Brigham Young respond to that argument.

When Benjamin Fine of the *New York Times* interviewed Einstein in 1952, Einstein said:

It is not enough to teach man a specialty. Through it he may become a kind of useful machine, but not a harmoniously developed personality. It is essential that the student acquire an understanding of and a lively feeling for values. He must acquire a vivid sense of the beautiful and of the morally good.

Otherwise he—with his specialized knowledge—more closely resembles a well-trained dog. . . .

Overemphasis on the competitive system and premature specialization on the ground of immediate usefulness kill the spirit on which all cultural life depends, specialized knowledge included.²⁰

Now let us see what Brigham Young had to say on this topic:

Let us not narrow ourselves up; for the world, with all its variety of useful information and its rich hoard of hidden treasure, is before us; and eternity, with all its sparkling intelligence, lofty aspirations, and unspeakable glories, is before us, and ready to aid us in the scale of advancement and every useful improvement.²¹

Can we imagine that Jesus, the Creator of this earth and everything in it, lacked any kind of knowledge as He prepared to fulfill the assignment His Father gave Him to “go down” and “make an earth

whereon [we might] dwell”?²² I urge you to give serious effort to your general education courses. Rather than think of them as something to “get out of the way,” think of them as a way of becoming more like the Savior and of seeing His hand in all creation.

It has been said that major education prepares you to make a living but general education prepares you to make a life. You will succeed more in your chosen profession if you are broadly educated because you will be more versatile and more able to see how details relate to each other and create the big picture. Your employer will find this a valuable trait and will be able to entrust you with more responsibilities as you gain experience in the workplace. Furthermore, your leisure time will be spent in a more ennobling way if you learn to appreciate good art, music, literature, drama, dance, and film than if you succumb to consuming most of the entertainments that popular culture offers you. So much of it is unworthy of your time, attention, and money.

I hope you will approach your studies with the attitude demonstrated twenty-some years ago by a young man on this campus who was chosen to be a Rhodes Scholar—a rare achievement. When he won that honor, the campus newspaper published an interview in which he said that as he approached the library to study, he felt much the same way as when he approached church on Sundays to attend his meetings. Both study and worship were for him a time of spiritual edification. I commend that approach to you.

This young man was an example of what Elder Neal A. Maxwell has called the “disciple-scholar”:

*For a disciple of Jesus Christ, academic scholarship is a form of worship. It is actually another dimension of consecration. Hence one who seeks to be a disciple-scholar will take both scholarship and discipleship seriously; and, likewise, gospel covenants. For the disciple-scholar, the first and second great commandments frame and prioritize life. How else could one worship God with all of one's heart, might, **mind**, and strength? (See Luke 10:27.) . . .*

*Consecrated scholarship thus converges the life both of the mind and of the spirit!*²³

However, Elder Maxwell qualified his urging that we worship God with our minds through scholarship. The first qualification is that “there is no democracy among truths. They are not of equal significance.”²⁴ The revealed truths of the gospel *are* more important and *do* take precedence over the truths that have been forged out of the collective efforts of human beings. It is good to know both, but if we must on occasion choose where to put our allegiance, we should choose the revealed truths of the gospel. The second qualification Elder Maxwell offered is this: “Genius without meekness is not enough to qualify for discipleship.”²⁵ The disciple-scholar blends intellectual traits with spiritual ones that often seem to be their opposite. Such a person tempers curiosity with obedience, questioning with submissiveness, zeal for knowledge with faith and humility, and striving to excel with brotherly kindness. Perhaps this is part of what is meant by the encouragement to “seek learning, even by study and also by faith.”²⁶

I recall a time when I was in a BYU ward where one of the bishop’s counselors was an undergraduate student with what I judged to be fairly ordinary intellectual talents. But he had extraordinary faith and a desire to obey. In a sacrament meeting he told of an experience he had had the previous week. With a deadline for a paper looming before him, he was hard at work writing one afternoon when a knock came at the door. A member of the ward needed his help. This young counselor knew that if he took the time to serve, he would be hard-pressed to finish his paper and do a good job on it. But he chose to serve. He came back to his paper with the deadline now only hours away. He told us he knelt and asked his Heavenly Father to let words flow into his mind. When he went back to work, his prayer was answered in just the way he had asked. Words flowed into his mind, and he was able to complete his assignment on time. He learned not only by study but also by faith.

Such dramatic experiences may not come to you. But I believe all can have experiences such as I had one Saturday afternoon in graduate school. I was wrestling with the homework in a course requiring a knowledge of statistics that I lacked. As I grew more and more frustrated, I was tempted to just give up and take a zero on the assignment,

knowing it would mean I would do poorly on the next test as well. But instead I prayed, and there came to me a feeling of calm and confidence that I could do this. As I went back to the homework with more faith, I found that I could figure it out, and I was able to do the assignment and pass the test.

This principle that faith contributes to learning is reinforced in the Doctrine and Covenants:

Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.

And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come.²⁷

Notice that two ways in which we gain knowledge and intelligence are through diligence and obedience. Some things we cannot learn through intellectual efforts alone. How can we know that the windows of heaven will open for us unless we tithe? How can we know the blessings of Sabbath observance unless we keep the Sabbath holy? If we are diligent and not hit-and-miss in our obedience, we will know things in a way we could never know them by study alone. Let us remember the counsel of Jacob: “To be learned is good if [we] hearken unto the counsels of God.”²⁸ Such hearkening will increase our knowledge and enlarge our intellectual aptitude.

Finally, let us follow the counsel given by our beloved prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley, when he was a member of the Twelve nearly forty years ago. Speaking of the Savior’s invitation to “learn of me,”²⁹ President Hinckley said:

With all of your learning, learn of Him. With all of your study, seek knowledge of the Master. That knowledge will complement in a wonderful way the secular training you receive and give a fulness to your life and character that can come in no other way.³⁰

PREPARING FOR “LIFELONG LEARNING AND SERVICE”

The fourth aim of a BYU education is to prepare you for “lifelong learning and service.” As I stated earlier, it is not to prepare you to earn a lot of money. Nevertheless, statistics show that, on average, those with college degrees earn significantly more than those with less education.³¹ Thus most of you will become comparatively wealthy simply as a byproduct of earning a degree. Notice I said “comparatively wealthy”—and the comparison group is much of the population in the rest of the world.

On a National Public Radio program, I heard recently that one billion people on this earth live on one dollar a day and another two billion people live on two dollars a day. Think of those figures as you listen to these statistics I gleaned recently from the newspaper: Almost \$7 billion was spent in the United States last year on cosmetics alone.³² Some \$13 billion was spent on chocolate.³³ Another \$7 billion was spent “on videotape rentals, \$20 billion at jewelry stores, and \$24 billion at liquor stores.”³⁴ Altogether those sums total \$71 billion. Meanwhile, an organization called Bread for the World Institute estimates that it would take only an additional \$1 billion a year from the U.S. over the next fifteen years to subtract “512 million people from among the estimated 800 million people worldwide who suffer from hunger.”³⁵ These figures challenge us all to consider whether we have the right priorities for using our means.

Those who are privileged to “enter to learn” at BYU have an obligation to then “go forth to serve.”³⁶ Let me read to you from the aims document:

Since a decreasing fraction of the Church membership can be admitted to study at BYU, it is ever more important that those who are admitted use their talents to build the kingdom of God on the earth. . . . Students should learn, then demonstrate, that their ultimate allegiance is to higher values, principles, and human commitments rather than to mere self-interest. By doing this, BYU graduates can counter the destructive and often materialistic self-centeredness and worldliness that afflict modern society. A

*service ethic should permeate every part of BYU's activities—from the admissions process through the curriculum and extracurricular experiences to the moment of graduation. This ethic should also permeate each student's heart, leading him or her to the ultimate wellspring of charity—the love for others that Christ bestows on His followers.*³⁷

The pure love of Christ will fill our hearts as we serve the less fortunate. The self-centeredness of those who ignore the poor and the needy is well-depicted in a mural painted by the great Latter-day Saint artist Minerva Teichert on a wall of the world room in the Manti Temple. Some of the murals in this room show the grand march of gentile history from the Tower of Babel to the sailing of Columbus. In one mural, against the backdrop of a great and spacious building, are a number of colorful, brightly lit figures who represent the wealthy, powerful, learned, and successful people of the world—those who have made things happen and have left their mark. In contrast to these grand figures are a number of darker figures in the foreground that one almost doesn't notice at first. They represent a variety of people in need: a homeless family, a mother and her lame son, a crippled soldier who has lost a leg in battle, a woman holding the limp body of her child in her arms, another woman clutching her head in despair, and a family of immigrants driven by oppression to seek a new life in an unseen land.³⁸ Surveying this mural, one realizes with shock that the rich and powerful don't even glance at the poor and needy on the margins of their worldly parade. Perhaps these words from Jacob explain how this could happen: "Because they are rich they despise the poor, and they persecute the meek, and their hearts are upon their treasures; wherefore, their treasure is their god."³⁹

We know that riches are not in themselves bad; rather, it is the way we use riches that leads either to approbation or condemnation. We learn also from Jacob that if we seek first for the kingdom of God and obtain a hope in Christ, we "shall obtain riches, if [we] seek them." But he adds a powerful caution: We should seek them "for the intent to do good—to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted."⁴⁰

As with riches, fame is not necessarily bad—if it comes from doing something good. Certainly we are grateful to know the story of Columbus, whose voyage prepared the way for a new nation where freedom would flourish and the gospel could be restored. A deed like his is worthy of mention in the world’s history. But remember that one can also do important service that likely won’t be recorded by historians. These words from the closing lines of George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* express an important truth:

*The growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs.*⁴¹

Whether you serve in relative obscurity as a parent or a Primary teacher or whether you serve in the limelight as a government official or a prominent Church leader, your service is significant to its beneficiaries, and it is known to the Lord.

I know that you students have already begun to give significant service, which has been considered in the decision to admit you to the university. Let me suggest some ways that you can continue to serve. One is to accept callings and assignments in your ward and stake. Another is to take a service-learning course. The Jacobsen Center for Service and Learning on this campus helps teachers make service an integral part of the curriculum in many courses, and it keeps track of service opportunities for which students may volunteer outside of class. The David M. Kennedy Center has several international study programs that make service in a foreign land a meaningful part of the time students spend abroad. But you don’t need to travel abroad or even to turn to an organized center to find opportunities to serve. They are all around you in your family, your ward, your apartment or residence hall, and the community.

One of the joys of my current assignment is to review portfolios of students who are applying to graduate with University Honors. Among other things, these portfolios contain a description of a memorable service activity that each student has engaged in. As I have read

these descriptions, I have sometimes been humbled to tears by the quality and quantity of the service rendered. Keep in mind that students who want to graduate with honors must also keep a high GPA as well as do original research and write a thesis while taking a regular load of courses, so finding time for significant service requires great discipline and sacrifice on their part. Yet they do it willingly, and they write of tutoring children with developmental disabilities or helping those with physical handicaps or giving health care or helping to build schools or sanitation facilities in less-developed nations. Often the honors thesis itself represents research that has blessed or will bless the lives of others. You don't have to be an honors student to serve others or to do research that may benefit others; nevertheless, the Honors Program is open to all, and many of you freshmen may want to investigate joining. Regardless, you will find your learning and service here to be just as perfunctory or just as enriching as you decide to make them.

CONCLUSION

The four aims together “aspire to promote an education that helps students integrate all parts of their university experience into a fundamentally sacred way of life.”⁴² No other university I know of (except our sister campuses in Hawaii and Idaho) aspires to such a lofty goal. Because of the seriousness of what we are about, some of you may be thinking that life at BYU will be a cross between boot camp and a never-ending church meeting. You may be asking yourselves, “Isn't there going to be any fun here?” The answer, of course, is yes. You will find plenty of fun—in adventures with roommates and friends; at activities in your ward and residence halls; at sporting events, concerts, and dances; and, occasionally, even in the classroom. I don't need to wish for you that you will have fun. It will happen.

But I do wish for you that when you look back years from now, you will see that your college years were much more than fun. I wish for you the peace of mind that comes from knowing you honored commitments, treated friends and associates in a Christlike way, and increased in self-discipline and integrity. I hope you will feel a humble

gratitude from knowing that you dedicated—even consecrated—yourself to improving your intellectual talents and increasing your spirituality. I pray that because you have tasted the joy that comes from service, you will seek to serve continually throughout your life. Such a sweet self-assessment can be yours years hence if you do not content yourself now with lounging comfortably at a base camp in the foothills when, with some exertion, you could be standing on the summit of a great mountain.

President Kimball prophesied that Brigham Young University will one day be an “educational Everest.”⁴³ President Merrill J. Bateman last fall expressed his belief that BYU will play an important role in the establishment of Zion.⁴⁴ I believe that will happen in large part because the students who come here will rise to the challenge of the four aims and dedicate themselves to becoming a Zion people.

I express my confidence in you. You are a chosen generation, and the Lord loves you and will bless you in all your righteous endeavors. I leave you my testimony that His Church and kingdom have been restored to the earth through the Prophet Joseph Smith and that His chosen servant President Gordon B. Hinckley leads His work on the earth today. I am grateful for that testimony, and I bear it in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

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2. Mission of BYU.
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4. The Aims of a BYU Education (1 March 1995).
5. See Jeffrey R. Holland, “A ‘Notion’ at Risk: The Greater Crisis in American Education,” address given at the National Press Club, Washington, D.C., 22 March 1984, 7–8; in *American Education*, 20 (June 1984), 518.
6. Spencer W. Kimball, “On My Honor,” BYU devotional address, 12 September 1978.
7. Church Educational System Honor Code; see Brigham Young University Bulletin, 2000–2001 Undergraduate Catalog, 6.
8. Robert Bolt, *A Man for All Seasons: A Play in Two Acts* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1960), act 2, p. 83.
9. Bolt, *Man for All Seasons*, act 2, p. 83; emphasis in original.

10. Boyd K. Packer, “Ye Are the Temple of God,” *Ensign*, November 2000; emphasis in original.
11. Mormon 8:36–37.
12. Mormon 8:39.
13. Mormon 8:38.
14. Doctrine and Covenants 89:18–20.
15. See Stan L. Albrecht and Tim B. Heaton, “Secularization, Higher Education, and Religiosity,” in *Review of Religious Research* 26, no. 1 (September 1984): 43–58.
16. Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1902–32), 2:8 (22 January 1834).
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19. Doctrine and Covenants 88:80.
20. Albert Einstein, quoted in Benjamin Fine, “Einstein Stresses Critical Thinking: Opposing Early Specialties, He Says College Must Aim at ‘Harmonious’ Personality,” *News, New York Times*, 5 October 1952, 37; also included as “Education for Independent Thought” in Albert Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions*, ed. Carl Seelig, trans. and rev. Sonja Bargmann (New York: Bonanza Books, 1954), 66–67.
21. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* 8:9 (4 March 1860).
22. Abraham 3:24.
23. Neal A. Maxwell, “The Disciple-Scholar,” in Henry B. Eyring, ed., *On Becoming a Disciple-Scholar: Lectures Presented at the Brigham Young University Honors Program Discipline and Discipleship Lecture Series* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995), 7, 8; emphasis in original.
24. Maxwell, “The Disciple-Scholar,” 3.
25. Maxwell, “The Disciple-Scholar,” 14.
26. Doctrine and Covenants 88:118.
27. Doctrine and Covenants 130: 18–19.
28. 2 Nephi 9:29.
29. Matthew 11:29.
30. Gordon B. Hinckley, in *Conference Reports of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, October 1964, 118; see also Hinckley, “First Presidency Message: With All Thy Getting Get Understanding,” *Ensign*, August 1988, 5.
31. See “Income of Young Adults,” Fast Facts, National Center for Education Statistics, nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=77.
32. See Anna Quindlen, “While Obsessing Over Our Bodies, Have We Lost Our Minds?” *Opinion, Salt Lake Tribune*, 18 April 2001, A19.

33. See Sudarsan Raghavan and Sumana Chatterjee, "Child Slavery Taints Global Chocolate Industries," *Nation/World, Salt Lake Tribune*, 1 July 2001, A9.
34. *Foreign Aid to End Hunger: Hunger 2001*, 11th Annual Report on the State of World Hunger, Bread for the World Institute, Washington, D.C., 10; quoted in Shelvia Dancy, "If They Wanted, Americans Could Feed Half the World's Starving People," *Spirituality and Ethics, Salt Lake Tribune*, 14 April 2001, C1.
35. Dancy, "If They Wanted," C1 ; see *Foreign Aid to End Hunger*, 7, 10.
36. Motto of Brigham Young University.
37. Aims of BYU.
38. I am grateful to my colleague Doris R. Dant for illuminating my understanding of these murals through her article "Minerva Teichert's Manti Temple Murals," published in *BYU Studies* 38, no. 3 (1999): 6–44.
39. 2 Nephi 9:30.
40. Jacob 2:19; see also verse 18.
41. George Eliot, *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life* (1871–1872), Book VIII: *Sunset and Sunrise*, "Finale," last paragraph.
42. Aims of BYU.
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44. See Merrill J. Bateman, "Learning in the Light of Truth," BYU annual university conference address, 21 August 2000.



Learning by Heart

SUSAN W. TANNER

♦ *BYU Commencement Address, August 12, 2004*

INTRODUCTION



Susan W. Tanner was serving as the Young Women general president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and was serving on the BYU Board of Trustees when she delivered this address. She encouraged the BYU campus community to learn by heart, a rarely discussed aspect of one of BYU's aims—lifelong learning. Sister Tanner emphasized that when an individual learns by heart, the truths become internalized and can then lift, inspire, and change the heart.

*Learning by heart enables us
to pursue lifelong learning and
service more fully—which
should be an ongoing outcome
of a BYU education.*

— SUSAN W. TANNER



IT IS MY PRIVILEGE to be able to say a few words to you. I would like to begin by offering my personal congratulations to the graduates and to the families and friends here today. It is a day of joy and a day when we praise the Lord for the many mercies He has given us.

A GIFT TWICE-BLESSED

My husband, John, just had a birthday. As we gathered to give him our gifts, our celebration looked a little different from that of most families. There was very little wrapping paper and ribbon and hardly any tangible evidence of gifts. Instead we presented him with memorizations as our gifts. For as long as I can remember, John has discouraged using store-bought presents to celebrate his holidays. Instead he has asked that we memorize a poem, song, or scriptural passage to recite for him. This way our offerings could be described the same as William Shakespeare described mercy: “It is twice blessed; / It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.”¹ I know this passage because I once memorized it for John. He has always felt that memorization gives our children and me a chance to give him something that we can also keep for ourselves. It is a gift from the heart.

I have learned that there are many benefits to memorizing. For me personally, it deepens my understanding of the passage and fixes it in my heart. As you go over and over a passage in your mind, you think about it again and again. The richness of the words, the way they are put together, the possible symbolisms, the clever use of literary devices, and new meanings that you may never have noticed or understood before—all become apparent in the process of memorizing. Memorizing can put words in our hearts as well as in our minds. Learning by heart—which may be somewhat of a dying tradition—means to learn something so deeply that it becomes part of our core:

it fills us; it changes us. Often my heart has been filled during early-morning runs as I have gone over in my mind the words from “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” (1995), “The Living Christ” (2000), or some scripture or poem I was memorizing.

I had read the family proclamation many times and felt love and appreciation for it. But as I memorized each word and sentence, I began to see how it spoke in detail to each of the cultural ills that plague our society. I felt hope that the eternal truths taught in the proclamation could arm me as I faced current and difficult moral issues. I began to feel greater personal affirmation from apostles and prophets and from the Lord for the family choices I had made over a lifetime. I felt strongly the knowledge that we have a Father in Heaven who has an unfailing plan for us. I felt His matchless love and goodness. I felt, as it explains in Proverbs, that “the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding” and “wisdom entereth into thine heart.”² My heart was filled with knowledge, understanding, wisdom, and love. This knowledge encouraged gratitude, personal improvement, and the desire to strengthen others.

This tradition of memorizing and reciting has allowed us as parents additional glimpses into the hearts of our children. As they choose their own passages, we often discover what challenges or joys they are experiencing. We also learn of their wisdom and sometimes of their sense of humor. I remember on John’s fortieth birthday when our then fifteen-year-old daughter presented a poem by Lewis Carroll:

*“You are old, Father William,” the young man said,
 “And your hair has become very white;
 And yet you incessantly stand on your head—
 Do you think, at your age, it is right?”³*

Although somewhat dismayed that year at feeling kind of old, my husband was even more delighted at our daughter’s sense of humor. Another time a daughter chose to recite Shakespeare’s “Sonnet 29”: “When in disgrace with fortune and men’s eyes / I all alone bewep my outcast state.”⁴ This came at a time when she was feeling inadequate and friendless. One child chose a love poem when he was

feeling heady and in love. Another memorized section 4 of the Doctrine and Covenants and announced to us that she had decided to serve a mission. What our children learn by heart and share with their father becomes an expression of their own heartfelt emotions.

FOCUSED ON THE HEART

“Learning by heart” is a rich phrase. Think about the word *heart*. We all know that our hearts are central to life. Physically the heart is the life-sustaining organ of our bodies. Likewise, *heart* is used to describe the essential, most vital part of our spiritual being—one’s innermost character, feelings, or inclinations. In a gospel sense the heart is our spiritual core. Hence the scriptures teach that “as [a man] thinketh in his *heart*, so is he”⁵ and that “where your treasure is, there will your *heart* be also.”⁶ The gospel must be “written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the *heart*.”⁷ Over and over in the scriptures prophets remind us, as Alma told his son, to “let the affections of thy *heart* be placed upon the Lord forever.”⁸ Learning by heart in its richest sense is a gospel duty. It is a twin commandment to remembering. We are to learn spiritual truth by heart and then retain in remembrance what we have placed deep in our hearts.

Many of you here today have spent the last four years (or maybe more) at this wonderful university to become educated. What have you learned by heart? Some of it is factual or informational. Such learning is useful. It helps us solve daily problems and meet immediate needs. Dr. Todd Britsch, former academic vice president of BYU, said:

*We remember some data that helps us solve a problem, we direct someone to a particular location, we discuss a painting without a copy of it in front of us, we order a part for a computer without a catalog at hand. In each case we have memorized something that helps us shorten the process of dealing with daily experience. Without this storehouse of facts and data, we would be helpless.*⁹

Other things we learn by heart serve even more profound ends, as Dr. Britsch went on to describe:

*A scripture that aids in counseling a sorrowing friend; a hymn whose words and music express our most profound religious feelings when we are struggling with a matter of faith; . . . a technical point that helps us defend a position that is important for us, our family, or our community.*¹⁰

Have you deposited rich and worthwhile learning into your memory bank so that when you need to make a withdrawal there will be abundant treasures of knowledge and wisdom available to you? Have you acquired both the skill and the love of learning so that you can continue throughout your life to fill your bank and thus be more serviceable to others?

A UNIVERSITY CONTEXT

Learning by heart enables us to pursue lifelong learning and service more fully—which should be an ongoing outcome of a BYU education. The Aims of a BYU Education document states:

*BYU should inspire students to keep alive their curiosity and prepare them to continue learning throughout their lives. . . . A BYU degree should educate students in how to learn, teach them that there is much still to learn, and implant in them a love of learning “by study and also by faith.”*¹¹

Brigham Young stated: “We might ask, when shall we cease to learn? I will give you my opinion about it; never, never.”¹² He also taught: “Our education should be such as to improve our minds and fit us for increased usefulness; to make us of greater service to the human family.”¹³

I am grateful for powerful examples in my life of people who are continually learning and serving—thus making the world a better place by using their vibrant minds and hearts.

A FAMILY-CENTERED CONTEXT

John's eighty-four-year-old mother is one such example. She is currently serving a temple mission—her sixth mission. It is always fun to talk to her because there is such excitement in her voice about each new discovery—be it about our church or a country's history or the local culture. She has taught herself to speak several languages to be more useful in her temple service. Over the years she has been a great source of suggested reading ideas for my book group because she is continually learning from interesting books. She is the mother of thirteen children who follow her example in hungering for knowledge. She is someone who has taken learning to heart.

I likewise saw a pattern of learning by heart in my family that began with my grandpa. It then extended to my dad and now to my generation. My grandfather and father had a love for geography, history, and cultures. They traveled as much as they could and can still recount in great and correct detail names of villages, mountains, rivers, and lakes they have visited. In my home as we grew up, we had contests to memorize the county seats of all the counties in the state, then the capitals of all the states in the United States, then the capitals of the countries on each continent. Of course in the process we studied maps, learned about languages and cultures, and visited lots of beautiful places of interest. My grandpa took us on trips and thus began the tradition of filling our hearts with knowledge and memories. He believed in giving his posterity experiences rather than things. My father has continued this.

One of the experiences my dad gave me that has filled my memory bank is climbing mountains together. It was hard work, but he taught me that the spectacular view from the top was more magnificent because I had earned it. He taught me to photograph exquisite scenes in my memory so that I could recall them anytime I needed the serenity of soul they could bring to me. I gained the knowledge that Heavenly Father loved me enough to create this world “to please the eye and to gladden the heart; . . . and to enliven the soul.”¹⁴

My dad just returned from Nauvoo, where he served as temple president. He is almost eighty now and sadly admits that he probably

won't stand on top of any of his favorite mountain peaks again. But he has those vistas that he loves so much stored in his memory bank, reminiscent of William Wordsworth's poem about seeing a host of golden daffodils that Dad so often quoted to me:

*I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:*

*For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.¹⁵*

Because my dad memorized those mountain scenes, he can return to them when “in vacant or in pensive mood” and again fill his heart with pleasure.

THE EXAMPLE OF A PROPHET

One of the many things I love about our dear President Gordon B. Hinckley is his bright mind and his love for learning. At the dedication of the remodeled library on this campus, there was much talk about the vast technology we had acquired that would help people distant from the campus access information from our great collection of books. President Hinckley was grateful for that, but then he tenderly held a beautiful book in his hands. He talked of his great love for the heft and feel of a book, about how nothing surpassed the pleasure of holding it and reading from its pages. He inherited a vast library of books from his father, and he knew its contents. Books have become part of him. His daughter Virginia Pearce said of him, “He frequently quotes Shakespeare. He quotes Kipling. Passages of great literature are just floating around in his head.”¹⁶ This is because he memorized them in his youth and sometimes recited them to his parents—as our children have done for us.

My husband and I heard lots of other relevant information “pop out” as we had the opportunity to take two ambassadors to visit President Hinckley—one from the Czech Republic and one from China. In each case we were astounded at the depth of his knowledge of the historical and political events of those lands. He is well read. He is a good thinker. He has a good memory and is wise in his ability to assimilate and utilize his knowledge. This lifelong learning has allowed him to be much more serviceable in the kingdom. He is able to draw treasures of wisdom out of the abundance of a heart well stocked with knowledge.

A GIFT OF SERVICE AND STRENGTH

The Aims of a BYU Education document explains that greater knowledge gives us the ability to be more serviceable:

Well-developed faith, intellect, and character prepare students for a lifetime of . . . service. . . . BYU students strengthen not only themselves—they “also bring strength to others in the tasks of home and family life, social relationships, civic duty, and service to mankind.”¹⁷

I memorized a poem by George Eliot that speaks eloquently about developing ourselves so that we may become one of the “choir invisible” whose lives “bring strength to others”:

*O may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence: . . .
. . . May I . . .
. . . be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardour, feed pure love,
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty—
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense.
So shall I join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world.¹⁸*

Through lifelong learning and service we may “join the choir invisible / Whose music is the gladness of the world.” As graduates of BYU we have a special duty so to live. As President Kimball said at the dedication of the Carillon Tower, may “the morality of the graduates of this university provide the music of hope for the inhabitants of this planet.”¹⁹

For our lives to become the music of hope for the world, our learning must be heart deep; it must reach our very core. We must be able not only to access information but to understand; we must acquire not only knowledge but wisdom. In this day and age we can look up anything, but it can only change us if we know it in our hearts. T. S. Eliot said, “Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? / Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?”²⁰

“O remember, remember,” Alma said to each of his sons.²¹ Let us “treasure up wisdom”²² in our hearts by dwelling in our hearts on blessings of protection, comfort, and peace; by pondering in our hearts moments of inspiration and revelation; and, above all, by remembering that we are covenant children of Heavenly Father. We must engrave our covenants in the fleshy tables of our hearts.

It is my hope and my prayer that, as Jeremiah said, God “will put [His] law in [our] inward parts, and write it in [our] hearts.”²³ May we learn by heart those things that will continually fill our memory banks with wisdom and then use that wisdom in His service is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, act 4, scene 1, lines 186–87.
2. Proverbs 2:6, 10.
3. Lewis Carroll, “You Are Old, Father William,” stanza 1.
4. William Shakespeare, “Sonnet 29,” lines 1–2.
5. Proverbs 23:7; emphasis added.
6. Matthew 6:21; emphasis added.
7. 2 Corinthians 3:3; emphasis added.
8. Alma 37:36; emphasis added.
9. Todd A. Britsch, “Memorization: ‘Regurgitation’ or ‘Learning by Heart?’” *Focus on Faculty* 5, no. 3 (Summer 1997): 2.
10. Britsch, “Memorization,” 2.

11. The Aims of a BYU Education (1 March 1995); quoting Doctrine and Covenants 88:118.
12. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854–86), 3:203 (17 February 1856).
13. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* 14:83 (9 April 1871).
14. Doctrine and Covenants 59:18–19.
15. William Wordsworth, “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud,” 1807, stanzas 3–4; emphasis added.
16. Virginia H. Pearce, quoted in Jake Parkinson, “U. Endowment Expands,” *Deseret News*, 6 April 2003, A7.
17. Aims of BYU; quoting the Mission of Brigham Young University (4 November 1981).
18. George Eliot, “O May I Join the Choir Invisible” (1867).
19. Spencer W. Kimball, “The Second Century of Brigham Young University,” BYU devotional address, 10 October 1975.
20. T. S. Eliot, *The Rock* (1934), I.
21. Helaman 5:9.
22. Doctrine and Covenants 38:30.
23. Jeremiah 31:33.



The Academic Anableps

BONNIE BRINTON

♦ *Address at a BYU-Hosted Academic Conference,
February 27, 2009*

INTRODUCTION



Bonnie Brinton, a nationally recognized speech-language pathologist, was a professor in the BYU Department of Communication Disorders and dean of BYU Graduate Studies when she delivered this address. Brinton spoke to the blessing of working at BYU, where scholars “can use information gained through spiritual means at the same time that [they are] observing and testing the phenomena in the world around [them]” (page 99). She related this ability to be “bilingual”—as President Spencer W. Kimball called it in his address “The Second Century of Brigham Young University”—to the anableps, a fish that can see simultaneously what is above and below the waterline.

This text has been excerpted from an address delivered at the conference “Inquiry, Scholarship, and Learning and Teaching in Religiously Affiliated Colleges and Universities,” held at Brigham Young University; it was subsequently published in *BYU Studies* 49, no. 2 (2010): 25–29.

*The ability to employ spiritual
knowledge to frame more
traditional ways of knowing
greatly enhances our ability
to tackle complex issues.*

— BONNIE BRINTON



A FEW YEARS AGO we visited an aquarium when we were on vacation. I remember looking in a tank that had the most fascinating little fish called anableps. Anableps like to cruise the surface of the water. They are called four-eyed fish because they appear to have four eyes—two that sit above the water level and two that sit below the water level. In truth, the anableps does not have four eyes—it has two eyes that are divided to allow the fish to see things that are above it in the air as well as things that are below it in the water. Anableps are adapted to make sense of all these images—to keep track of predators above them in the air and food below them in the water at the same time and to plunge or leap accordingly.

For me, working in a religious institution allows me to be something of an academic anableps. That is, I can use information gained through spiritual means at the same time that I am observing and testing the phenomena in the world around me. I am a speech-language pathologist who specializes in working with children who do not communicate well because they have language impairment, learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, or other challenges. I have been involved in clinical work and research here at BYU and at other universities. I am essentially in the business of trying to understand how human beings learn to communicate as they mature and how various disabling factors wreak havoc with that process. I am also involved in clinical work. I teach students to intervene in the lives of others in an attempt to enhance their growth patterns and change their behavior.

Working in a religious institution allows us to recognize that a moral framework influences our work and encourages us consciously to define and refine that framework to reflect the mission of the university.

This is where the ability to be an academic anableps comes in. The ability to employ spiritual knowledge to frame more traditional ways of knowing greatly enhances our ability to tackle complex issues in human development and behavior. Spiritual insight provides a sound value system within which we can approach our work.

Let me offer a clinical example. Over fifteen years ago we were designing a treatment program for a five-year-old boy with language impairment. Despite the fact that he was bright, that he came from a supportive home, and that he was anxious to communicate, his ability to understand and produce language was markedly impaired. He did not understand much of what was said to him, and he struggled to express his ideas and share his thoughts. Basically, at age five he could not communicate nearly as well as a typical three-year-old. At the time, the traditional wisdom in our field dictated that we should direct our intervention focus on helping this child learn to produce and understand language structure. That is, we should facilitate his ability to learn the grammatical morphemes to put sentences together. But we had more pressing concerns than his immature sentence structure. This child's inability to communicate made it difficult for his parents to relate to him in the same way they did to their other children. The child did not like conversation. He could not share his feelings with his family, and he could not express his ideas. He could not explain what he had done that morning to his dad when he got home from work. He disliked print and avoided shared book reading with his mother.

Our academic anableps view of this child pushed us to concentrate not on the form of this child's language but on his ability to use what language he had to connect with his family. From a spiritual perspective, what could be more important than enhancing this child's ability to communicate with his parents? What would matter more than this from an eternal perspective? Wouldn't the ability to communicate in order to form family relationships be paramount? We consciously let this spiritual perspective guide our scholarly perspective when we predicted that if we could enhance this child's ability to use language to relate to his family, he would have access to interactions and contexts that would facilitate the growth of his sentence structure.

In terms of treatment methods and approaches, we took a very Latter-day Saint approach. We gave this child a journal. Yes, we gave him a journal despite the fact that he didn't talk or understand well, he disliked books, and he couldn't write. We then planned and carried out interesting events with him and chronicled those events in the journal afterward. To do this, we had the child tell us to the best of his ability about the events he had experienced, and we wrote down exactly what he said. Then we sent the journal home with him, and his dad read the day's entry with him in the evening.

Within a short period of time, this child took ownership of the journal. He loved dictating entries, and he would ask us to read and reread the entries so that he could edit them—adding details and more complex forms. We have one lovely therapy segment on tape where a student clinician is writing the child's comments in his journal, and he takes the journal out of her hands and tries to write in it himself—even though he can't form letters. He looked forward to sharing his day's events with his dad in the evening; it provided a framework for more complex and meaningful conversations than they usually had. And yes, we observed the growth in sentence form that we had hoped for.

I think the journaling did something else for this child, something one could only appreciate with anableps eyes. Writing down the things that this child did emphasized the idea that his life, his actions, and his choices mattered—they were important enough to capture in print and reflect on later. Although he may not have been interested in books initially, he was fascinated by his own written story. And that led him to an increasing interest in the stories of others. This was a significant breakthrough for a child with his type and level of disability.

Our approach with this child was unconventional at the time. Working within an institution where we could recognize and own the values that framed our decisions made it possible for us to try something innovative. Now, fifteen years later, the approach we took is common—it is considered sound practice. But we had to recognize that our spiritual perspective underlay and supported our empirical perspective in order for our approach to make sense at the time.

Just as our clinical work and teaching have been informed by our dual vision, our research has been guided by a similar perspective. I have worked on collaborative research with my husband and colleague, Martin Fujiki, for over twenty-seven years. We have many responsibilities, and our research time is limited. We desperately want to research the questions that will lead to better interventions for children. This means that we must constantly evaluate the focus and nature of our research program. Through the lens of the value system of this university, we try to decide what research questions are important and how they can best be addressed. More than once, a research focus has crystallized during temple worship, and we have concluded: Here is an issue that matters in the lives of children. Let's chase it down. Let's find out more. I will say that the sometimes unconventional focus of our work has required us to exercise an annoying amount of rigor and care to place our work in the mainstream literature, but that, too, has been a refining experience.

In summary, I think a religious university is uniquely poised to articulate and promote a set of values within which scholars can frame their work. We do not lose or devalue what might be referred to as an empirical perspective or more traditional ways of knowing. We simply build from a spiritual scaffold. It is good to be able to see both above and below the water at the same time.



“That All May Be Edified of All”

JOHN S. TANNER

♦ *BYU University Conference Address, August 24, 2010*

INTRODUCTION



John S. Tanner was serving as academic vice president when he delivered this address during the faculty session of university conference. He based his remarks on the Lord’s great revelation on education—Doctrine and Covenants 88, or the Olive Leaf—which established the School of the Prophets. Tanner emphasized the connection between school and temple in Latter-day Saint history and doctrine, as well as the importance of all learning of all. He spoke of the need for learners and teachers to be worthy and to walk together as brothers and sisters bound by shared commandments and covenants “in the bonds of love” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:133).

This talk has been excerpted; for the full text, visit speeches.byu.edu/envisioning-BYU.

*It is in the minutiae of our lives,
in our quotidian conduct
as Christians, that we qualify
for the companionship of
the Spirit, without which
we cannot teach.*

—JOHN S. TANNER



TEMPLE AND SCHOOL

THIS YEAR'S CONFERENCE theme is drawn, as they so often are, from Doctrine and Covenants 88, the revelation that directed the Saints to build the Kirtland Temple and the School of the Prophets. In 1977, then president Dallin H. Oaks described section 88 as “the first and greatest revelation of this dispensation on the subject of education.”¹ He went on to state that this revelation, “which defined the objectives of the School of the Prophets and gave related commandments, counsel, and knowledge, is still the basic constitution of Church education. It defines Brigham Young University’s role in the kingdom.”² This scriptural constitution effectively links Kirtland to Provo, temple to school.

I very much admire the marvelous murals that face each other in the main gallery of the Education in Zion exhibit in the Joseph F. Smith Building. (These magnificent murals, by the way, are the work of a student!) The murals dramatically make the point that temple and school are homologous in Latter-day Saint tradition. They are part of a “unified work,” as President Oaks said.³ The positioning of these murals across from each other in the gallery visually draws the connection between temple and school, as do the similarities between the treatments of the subjects in the murals. In both paintings the buildings are dwarfed by towering clouds and stunning skies; in both the buildings are bathed in light from the heavens. These artistic elements suggest to me how our humble human effort to seek enlightenment is illuminated by the grander, sublime light that God sheds forth upon the world. The paintings recall for me these verses from Doctrine and Covenants 88:

And the light which shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings;

Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space.⁴

The purpose of the School of the Prophets was to prepare the first Church leaders for their ministries. Historically, the school lasted only a few months. Imaginatively, the School of the Prophets remains with us still. Principles revealed in section 88 for this temple-like school articulate enduring ideals for every school in Zion and, indeed, for the education of every Latter-day Saint. They establish the pattern. The injunctions “sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God,”⁵ “teach ye diligently,”⁶ “seek learning, even by study and also by faith,”⁷ “clothe yourselves with the bond of charity,”⁸ and so forth have never been rescinded. Nor has the Lord’s curriculum. He expects His people to be instructed “in theory, in principle,”⁹ “of things both in heaven and in the earth,”¹⁰ obtaining “a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms”¹¹ and “the best books”¹² as well as “languages, tongues, and people”¹³ and the “laws of God and man.”¹⁴ All these remain foundational to BYU’s mission, which is to prepare, if not prophets, then disciples thoroughly educated in the academic and spiritual disciplines. BYU is to be a school of disciplined disciples.

Today I want to weave my remarks around a few phrases from this constitutional revelation describing the School of the Prophets, beginning with the conference theme.

“THAT ALL MAY BE EDIFIED OF ALL”

The theme scripture “that all may be edified of all”¹⁵ is rich with implications for BYU to plumb and put into practice.

Edify

Consider first the word *edify*. *Edify* comes from the Latin for “build up or construct.” By extension, it came to mean “to build up morally or spiritually.” Everything we do here should be upbuilding, edifying.

Our classes; our scholarship; our cultural and athletic events; our relationships with faculty, staff, and students: all should edify.

Now this does not mean we must focus only on the positive or never criticize folly and error. Critical thinking lies at the heart of higher education. Not surprisingly, it is one of the most ubiquitous learning outcomes for BYU degree programs, and it will be core to the outcomes being developed for our general education program. I hope that critical thinking is taught in every class at BYU. This educational aim is not incompatible with edification. After all, to erect learning on firm foundations, it is sometimes necessary to break down false suppositions and premature certainties.

Nor does the Lord expect an edifying education to leave disciples ignorant of the negative, perplexing realities of this fallen world. Indeed, He specifically enjoins us to know about such matters when He lays out a curriculum that includes knowledge of things “which have been” and “are,” including “the wars and the perplexities of the nations.”¹⁶ Section 88 suggests that knowledge of the world as it exists is essential in preparing us to preach redemption to the world and make it better.¹⁷

Similarly, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught:

*Thy mind, O man! If thou wilt lead a soul unto salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost heavens, and search into and contemplate the darkest abyss, and the broad expanse of eternity—thou must commune with God.*¹⁸

Note that to lead a soul upward, it is sometimes necessary to “search into and contemplate the darkest abyss,” where many souls are trapped. But also note that the intent of searching the abyss is ultimately to lead souls heavenward to salvation—that is to edify—not to sojourn in the abyss or to revel in darkness or to “call evil good.”¹⁹ As guides to the culture and wisdom of a fallen world, we need to take care not to fall into the abyss ourselves—a common professional pitfall—or to cause our students to fall into the pit. To edify those we teach, we “must commune with God.”

An education that edifies does not destroy innocence but pushes back ignorance. It does not eradicate faith but enables educated believers to articulate reasons for the hope that is in them.²⁰ Hence our students must be taught to analyze and argue, to weigh evidence regarding competing ideas, to make well-reasoned inferences, and to criticize their own opinions as well as those of others. We must diligently seek learning. We do our students no service if they are not able to parry the best arguments of the adversary. But we do them ill service if we become the adversary. I am not a fan of playing the devil's advocate if by this students fail to ever feel our testimony.

Some believers enjoy the precious gift of childlike faith. Others are more like Dostoyevsky, who said: "It is not as a child that I believe and confess Jesus Christ. My hosanna is born of a furnace of doubt."²¹ In either case, an edifying education fits us for hosanna shouts.

All of All

The principle that *all* are to learn *of all* is also rich with implications for BYU.

Undergraduate education is introducing a new Freshman Mentoring program this fall. It promotes another kind of mentoring: student-to-student peer mentoring. This alters the traditional mentoring model, which is one of mentor-protégé. Traditionally, a mentor is a surrogate parent. The word *mentor*, you will recall, does not derive from a verb "to ment," as *conductor* derives from *conduct*. (Hence *mentee* is an illogical back-formation.) *Mentor* comes from the name of an old man whom Odysseus entrusted to be surrogate father for his son Telemachus when Odysseus went off to fight at Troy. The man's name was Mentor. Thus a mentor came to designate anyone who fills the role of surrogate father.

Peers provide a different kind of mentor: they are not surrogate parents but surrogate older siblings. Older brothers and sisters can also serve as important guides. Sometimes they can be even more effective than more-knowledgeable teachers, as C. S. Lewis remarked in the introduction to his book on the Psalms. He wrote:

This is not a work of scholarship. . . . I write for the unlearned about things in which I am unlearned myself. If an excuse is needed . . . for writing such a book, my excuse would be something like this. It often happens that two schoolboys can solve difficulties in their work for one another better than the master can. When you took the problem to a master, as we all remember, he was very likely to explain what you understood already, to add a great deal of information which you didn't want, and say nothing at all about the thing that was puzzling you. . . . The fellow-pupil can help more than the master because he knows less. The difficulty we want him to explain is one he has recently met.²²

Freshman peer mentors will not replace teaching assistants for particular courses (as one might mistakenly infer from the quote from C. S. Lewis). They will serve as general guides to university life. They are supposed to function much like older siblings.

A recent study by two BYU faculty has documented the critical role played by siblings in flourishing families.²³ I know from personal experience about the importance of good siblings. I have twelve of them. My parents were quite intentional about enlisting all of us in helping to raise the family by transmitting positive family values and culture.

As a BYU freshman, I was fortunate to have been mentored by three older sisters and several roommates who served as surrogate older brothers. I still bless the memory of these crucial guides to BYU for what they did for me as a young freshman. They set me on the right course academically, socially, and spiritually. They were, frankly, more valuable and influential mentors than my professors that first year at BYU. Our intent is to provide something like an older sibling through the new Freshman Mentoring program.

I say "new," but the idea is old at BYU. We have been using peer mentors in Freshman Academy for many years. The new program merely extends this tested model to the entire freshman class. The program also harks back to the founding of BYU. In the early days of Brigham Young Academy, Karl G. Maeser introduced a similar program, called the "monitorial system," that became the hallmark

of Maeser's pedagogical practice and of the students' experience at Brigham Young Academy.²⁴

The monitorial system in turn was based on scriptural precedents described in section 88 for the School of the Prophets, particularly on the concept found therein that those who taught and studied in this temple-school were expected to act toward each other as brothers and friends.

"SAVE HE IS CLEAN"

Another key element of that constitution is that those who participate in Church schools and temples must be worthy. The revelation says, "Ye shall not receive any among you into this school save he is clean."²⁵ Those who entered the school washed themselves and put on clean clothes. Zebedee Coltrin reported:

*Every time we were called together to attend to any business, we came together in the morning about sunrise, fasting, and partook of the sacrament each time; and before going to school we washed ourselves and put on clean linen.*²⁶

Likewise, BYU cannot fulfill its prophetic mission unless we live lives of integrity, honor, and virtue. Over the past six-plus years, I have occasionally been involved with difficult decisions to dismiss faculty who had violated our standards. These decisions are so painful for everyone involved. I plead with you to guard against wrongdoing, including small compromises that can lead to ever more serious misconduct. Be scrupulously true to your covenants and to your commitment to abide by the Honor Code and basic principles of professional ethics.

Thankfully, egregious violations that lead to dismissal are rare. But these are not the only failings that prevent us from realizing our potential to "become the fully anointed university of the Lord about which so much has been spoken."²⁷ What most often impedes our growth, individually and institutionally, are small shortcomings—often faults of omission rather than of commission. Those who attended

the School of the Prophets “were to prepare themselves by repenting of all covetousness, pride, light-mindedness, idleness, oversleeping, lustful desires, fault-finding, contention, and every other sin.”²⁸ As William Blake recognized, virtue resides in “minute particulars”: “He who would do good to another must do it in minute particulars.”²⁹ It is in the minutiae of our lives, in our quotidian conduct as Christians, that we qualify for the companionship of the Spirit, without which we cannot teach.³⁰

“CEASE TO BE COVETOUS”

One of these seemingly minute matters singled out in section 88 is covetousness. In fact, this is no small sin. “Thou shalt not covet” is one of the Ten Commandments.³¹ As the last of the ten, perhaps it receives less attention than it deserves, especially from those of us in the academy. Covetousness and envy, along with their cousin pride, are among the chief occupational hazards, spiritually, of the academy. Faculty culture in most universities is notoriously beset by petty jealousies, envy, rivalry, and contention. Knowing full well “the nature and disposition of almost all men”³²—and especially those accustomed to receiving the honors of men as the best and the brightest, the top of the class—the Lord instructs the future leadership of the Church: “See that ye love one another; cease to be covetous; learn to impart one to another as the gospel requires.”³³

This admonition follows immediately upon the counsel that everyone should be listened to and allowed a chance to speak, “that all may be edified of all, and that every man may have an equal privilege.”³⁴ It can be hard for us to allow others their turn to shine and contribute. When we ourselves are desperate to succeed, it can be difficult to rejoice in the successes of others.

You may remember the delightful children’s story *A Birthday for Frances* and how Frances struggled to give her little sister, Gloria, a chocolate Chompo Bar, which she squeezed lovingly and longingly all the way home from the store.³⁵ We’ve all been there with Frances. I was taught the lesson Frances had to learn by my life in a large family. In my family you had only a one-in-fifteen chance that the birthday

was going to be yours. So we learned to take pleasure in the birthdays and good things that happened to our siblings. We developed a tradition of “oohing and aahing” and cheering for the one opening presents on birthdays or Christmas. My dad drummed into us this saying: “Learn to rejoice in the successes of others!”

Similarly, Paul taught that we should “rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.”³⁶ Most of us are better at the latter than the former—better at sympathizing for misfortune than celebrating good fortune.

I mention the danger of covetousness, envy, and pride not because I detect a major problem here but because in the nature of things these lurk as ever-present perils on the edges of excellence. My remarks are intended to be prophylactic. As we pursue academic excellence—and pursue it we must with great diligence; this is our privilege and responsibility—let us be ever vigilant to eschew envy and pride. Few, if any, may ever be fired or excommunicated for these sins, but they can be fatal to our mission and to our souls nonetheless. Remember that the War in Heaven began in sibling rivalry; so did the first homicide. Civilization itself has been regarded as the attempt to regulate the internecine sibling rivalry prevalent in a state of nature, which Thomas Hobbes famously described as “*bellum omnium contra omnes*”: “the war of all against all.”³⁷ This is just the opposite of the condition that must prevail in Zion and her schools, where all are to be edified of all.

The gospel replaces sibling rivalry with sibling amity. It enables “*pax omnium pro omnibus*”: “the peace of all for all,” to reverse Hobbes. Schools, temples, homes, and churches in Zion are intended to be places of such peace and love, where “all may be edified of all.” No wonder that the Prophet Joseph, having learned such principles in section 88 of the Doctrine and Covenants, referred to the revelation as “the ‘olive leaf’ which we have plucked from the Tree of Paradise, the Lord’s message of peace to us.”³⁸ Section 88 is a great revelation of peace. It stands in sharp contrast to section 87, a revelation on war. I like to think of these sections as War and Peace, which stand side by side each other like the images of war and peace on Achilles’ shield.

**"YOUR FRIEND AND BROTHER...
IN THE BONDS OF LOVE"**

The Lord provided rituals to remind those who attended the School of the Prophets to live peaceably together as brothers, sisters, and friends. The attendants administered the sacrament and participated in the sacred ordinance of the washing of the feet. They also greeted each other before every class with this formal salutation:

I salute you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, in token or remembrance of the everlasting covenant, in which covenant I receive you to fellowship, in a determination that is fixed, immovable, and unchangeable, to be your friend and brother through the grace of God in the bonds of love, to walk in all the commandments of God blameless, in thanksgiving, forever and ever.³⁹

We do not now so greet each other here at BYU, of course, nor do I expect this practice to be reinstated here any time soon. But in our hearts this is exactly how we should regard those with whom we associate if we would be faithful to the legacy of the School of the Prophets and follow the spirit of our scriptural constitution. Think what it would mean if we said in our hearts to each student who arrives in our classes next week: "I salute you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ . . . in a determination . . . to be your friend and brother [or sister] . . . in the bonds of love."

What if we interacted with the staff, who serve us and the university so well, and with our faculty colleagues having this same salutation engraved in our hearts? Occasionally I am troubled to hear reports of arrogance or contempt by faculty for colleagues and staff. Occasionally, we also hear reports that our female faculty feel disrespected, especially by students, for choosing to work at BYU, even though each one has been approved by the BYU Board of Trustees. Brothers and sisters, these things ought not to be. Not here. Not at a university that shares a constitution with the School of the Prophets.

I am persuaded that one of BYU's greatest institutional strengths, though rarely acknowledged as such, is our shared belief that each

person is a child of God—loved by Him and endowed by birthright with infinite worth and almost unimaginable potential. People are not merely means to our own ends; they are themselves ends. We live in what Kant called a “kingdom of ends,” among immortals.⁴⁰ And, as C. S. Lewis reminded us, “It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses.”⁴¹

Let us always remember that our deepest and most lasting relationship with each other is as brothers and sisters. We were siblings before we came to this earth. We will remain brothers and sisters long after we have shed the professional titles and temporary distinctions that divide us into faculty, staff, student; full, associate, assistant, and adjunct professor. Let us ever walk together “through the grace of God in the bonds of love.”

CONCLUSION

In this spirit, please grant me a point of privilege to conclude by expressing appreciation for you, my dear colleagues, brothers, sisters, and friends. You make this difficult job much less difficult. As Sir Francis Bacon said of friends, you multiply my joys and divide my griefs.⁴²

Thank you, and may God bless you this coming year. I salute you in the name of Jesus Christ, as your friend and brother, amen.

NOTES

1. Dallin H. Oaks, “A House of Faith,” BYU annual university conference address, 31 August 1977.

2. Oaks, “House of Faith.”

3. Oaks, “House of Faith.”

4. Doctrine and Covenants 88:11–12.

5. Doctrine and Covenants 88:68.

6. Doctrine and Covenants 88:78.

7. Doctrine and Covenants 88:118.

8. Doctrine and Covenants 88:125.

9. Doctrine and Covenants 88:78.

10. Doctrine and Covenants 88:79.

11. Doctrine and Covenants 88:79.

12. Doctrine and Covenants 88:118.

13. Doctrine and Covenants 90:15.

14. Doctrine and Covenants 93:15.
15. Doctrine and Covenants 88:122.
16. Doctrine and Covenants 88:79.
17. Doctrine and Covenants 88:80.
18. Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 1902–32), 3:295 (25 March 1839).
19. Isaiah 5:20.
20. See 1 Peter 3:15.
21. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, written in his last notebook (1880–1881); see *Literaturnoe Nasledstvo* (Moscow: Nauka, 1971), 83:696.
22. C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (New York: Harcourt, 1958), 1.
23. See Laura M. Padilla-Walker, James M. Harper, and Alexander C. Jensen, “Self-Regulation as a Mediator Between Sibling Relationship Quality and Early Adolescents’ Positive and Negative Outcomes,” *Journal of Family Psychology* 24, no. 4 (August 2010): 419–28.
24. See Karl G. Maeser, “The Monitorial System,” *Church School Department, Juvenile Instructor*, 1 March 1901, 153–54; see also Maeser, *School and Fireside* (Salt Lake City: Skelton and Co., 1898), 25, 37, 249, 272; also see Fred Pinnegar, “The Spiritual and Historical Roots of Freshman Mentoring,” unpublished talk at Freshman Mentoring, 11 May 2010.
25. Doctrine and Covenants 88:138.
26. Zebedee Coltrin, “Remarks of Zebedee Coltrin on Kirtland, Ohio, History of the Church,” *Salt Lake School of the Prophets, 1883 Minute Book* (Palm Desert, California: ULC Press, 1981), 3 October 1883, 38.
27. Spencer W. Kimball, “The Second Century of Brigham Young University,” *BYU devotional*, 10 October 1975.
28. Exhibit text from the Education in Zion gallery in the Joseph F. Smith Building on BYU campus; see Doctrine and Covenants 88:121.
29. William Blake, *Jerusalem* (c. 1818–1820), chapter 3, plate 55, line 60.
30. See Doctrine and Covenants 42:14.
31. Exodus 20:17.
32. Doctrine and Covenants 121:39.
33. Doctrine and Covenants 88:123.
34. Doctrine and Covenants 88:122.
35. See Russell Hoban, *A Birthday for Frances* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976).
36. Romans 12:15.
37. Thomas Hobbes, *De Cive* (1642), preface.
38. Letter from Joseph Smith to William W. Phelps, *History of the Church*, 1:316 (14 January 1833).

39. Doctrine and Covenants 88:133.

40. Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* (1785), second section.

41. C. S. Lewis, "The Weight of Glory," in *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (New York: Macmillan, 1949), 14–15.

42. See Francis Bacon, "Of Friendship," *Essays* (1625).



Paired Aspirations

JAMES R. RASBAND

♦ *BYU University Conference Address, August 28, 2017*

INTRODUCTION



James R. Rasband was serving as academic vice president when he delivered this address. He situated his topic by observing how the restored gospel “rejects either-or choices in favor of both-and possibilities” (page 125). Note how instead of *or*, the restored gospel uses *and* in these dichotomies: “It is not faith *or* works but faith *and* works. It is not a choice between body *or* spirit but a recognition that both body *and* spirit constitute the soul of man” (page 125). Likewise BYU consistently straddles seeming contraries, such as learning by study *and* by faith. The faculty in BYU’s house of learning must negotiate tensions between these paired aspirations, each making legitimate and even compelling competing claims.

This talk has been excerpted; for the full text, visit speeches.byu.edu/envisioning-BYU.

*I am convinced that part of what
we must learn by our experience,
and part of our effort to build
a great and faithful university,
depends on deep and sometimes
frustrating engagement with
our paired aspirations.*

—JAMES R. RASBAND



I HAVE LONG LOVED BYU. My first experiences here were as a child in the late 1960s and early 1970s—I will spare you the pictures of my long hair and the splendid lime-green leisure suit I sported at the time. When my parents married, my mom had not yet completed her degree. So each summer for several years, my mom, my brother, and I drove to Provo from California so that my mother could work on her English degree. We lived in the old Heritage Halls, and my brother and I spent our summers playing in the canals that used to wind through the complex.

As far as I could tell, my mom didn't really need a degree. She was the sort of person who took charge of every meeting and council room into which she walked. But she wanted a degree. She wanted to learn from some of the best minds in the Church. She wasn't satisfied with what she knew. She wanted more. So we spent our summers at BYU, and I came very early to see BYU as the place to come if you wanted to make more of yourself and to see that education and the pursuit of light and truth were the path to that goal. I did not really understand much about the project or mission of this university, but I was convinced it was an ennobling one. And I still am.

I remember how my mother's love of literature was fueled by Richard Ellsworth, Allie Howe, and others in the English Department. My mother's love of studying the gospel came partly from Robert Matthews and Ellis Rasmussen. Then, in the early 1980s, my own love for literature was spurred by Steven Walker, who stirred my passion for J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis, and by Catherine Corman—now Catherine Corman Parry—who brought Chaucer to life. It was my turn to see the Book of Mormon in a new light because of Terry Warner, our emeritus colleague in the Philosophy Department.

During that same time, my wife, Mary, learned to love chemical engineering from John Oscarson and Ken Solen. A turning point

in Mary's education was Paul Hedman's pulling her aside a couple of days after a presentation and telling her that he had looked at her grades and that she could do better. (Remember the pre-FERPA world? And, for Mary's sake, I should add that her grades weren't that bad.) He ended up asking her to work as his research assistant, and later he encouraged her to pursue a master's degree in chemical engineering, which has been a great blessing in our lives.

This university and its faculty, past and present, have had a profound and multigenerational impact on me and on my family. I can think of no higher praise than to be counted with you as a member of this faculty. The enduring influence you have in the lives of students, in the lives of their children, and then in the lives of their grandchildren—and on and on as your impact ripples through time—is profound. I don't need any more evidence than my own life to know that what we are about here is just what President Spencer W. Kimball described in his address to faculty at our annual faculty workshop nearly fifty years ago: "education for eternity."¹

As I have pondered my first address to the faculty and found myself in various discussions with colleagues, I have felt some urge to declare for one side in the familiar tensions we can feel in our university stewardship, some of which President Kevin J Worthen mentioned in his address this morning.² We know the list: teaching and scholarship, faith and intellect, breadth and depth, experiential learning and theory, and diversity and unity. Our mission and aims embrace each of these paired aspirations.³ And the weight and sometimes stressful burden of doing them all falls most heavily on the faculty. Personally, there have been times when I have yearned for a clear road map to tell me exactly which one was most important in which context. As the academic vice president with responsibility for the rank-and-status process, I also feel this quite keenly. But for reasons I will explain, I believe the tension we feel is an important and necessary part of what President Gordon B. Hinckley once described as the great "experiment" of this university.⁴

This experiment would surely be an easier project—not just in terms of time management but also intellectually and spiritually—if we were not faced with hard questions and choices. But I believe we

would be poorer for it. Ultimately, I am convinced that part of what we must learn by our experience, and part of our effort to build a great and faithful university, depends on deep and sometimes frustrating engagement with our paired aspirations. That engagement requires us to discern when seemingly competing aspirations are actually harmonious, but it also requires us to recognize that there is no free lunch, and sometimes we face challenging “good, better, and best” choices between our paired aspirations.⁵

As we know from Doctrine and Covenants 130:20–21:

There is a law, irrevocably decreed . . . , upon which all blessings are predicated—

And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.

Thus, paired aspirations sometimes require us to choose which blessing we most want to obtain as a faculty and as a university.

From my vantage, embracing the challenge of pursuing aspirations in apparent tension is consistent with the restored gospel’s expansive perspective, which, over and over, rejects either-or choices in favor of both-and possibilities. It is not faith *or* works but faith *and* works.⁶ It is not a choice between body *or* spirit but a recognition that both body *and* spirit constitute the soul of man.⁷ It is not either priesthood authority *or* a priesthood of all believers but both a priesthood line of communication *and* a personal line of communication with the Lord.⁸ The examples could multiply, but the point is that we are meant to learn and grow by wrestling with paired principles in some apparent tension.

TEACHING AND RESEARCH

Let me now share some thoughts about the paired aspiration at the heart of our university project: the aspiration to be both teachers *and* scholars. Our mission statement establishes that “the mission of Brigham Young University . . . is to assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life.”⁹ To achieve that mission, the statement

sets forth “four major educational goals”: first, teaching “the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ”; second, providing a broad general education that teaches students to “think clearly [and] communicate effectively”; and third, providing deeper instruction in the students’ field of choice. The fourth goal is the charge to pursue “scholarly research and creative endeavor among both faculty and students.”¹⁰ That teaching *and* research both show up in our mission statement is no accident.

This paired aspiration has always been part of our history. You know the history and promises. The remarkable 1879 promise of the apostle John Taylor was that we would “see the day that Zion will be as far ahead of the outside world in everything pertaining to learning of every kind as we are today in regard to religious matters.”¹¹

Karl G. Maeser urged that “the spirit of the latter-day work” should infuse not only “teaching the alphabet or the multiplication tables” but also “unfolding the advanced truths of science and art.”¹²

President Kimball charged in his 1967 “Education for Eternity” address that the “faculty has a double heritage” that they must pass along: the secular “knowledge that history has washed to [the] feet” of mankind with the new knowledge brought by scholarly research and the vital and “revealed truths sent [to us] from heaven.”¹³ Reinforcing this charge, in his 1975 second-century address, President Kimball urged “rolling back the frontiers of knowledge” and said, “There is and must be an excitement and an expectation about the very nature and future of knowledge that underwrites the uniqueness of BYU.”¹⁴ Our obligation, he said, was to be “bilingual”—to “speak with authority and excellence to your professional colleagues in the language of scholarship, and [to] also be literate in the language of spiritual things.”¹⁵

Note again the embrace of paired duties. We have “a double heritage” and should be “bilingual.” In addition to our dual duty as faithful scholars, President Kimball emphasized our dual duty as teacher-scholars: “While the discovery of new knowledge must increase, there must always be a heavy and primary emphasis on transmitting knowledge—on the quality of teaching at BYU.”¹⁶

At the inauguration of President Dallin H. Oaks, President Harold B. Lee likewise said that BYU

has been established to the end that all pure knowledge must be gained by our people, handed down to our posterity, and given to all men.

We charge you to give constant stimulation to these budding scientists and scholars in all fields and to the urge to push back further and further into the realms of the unknown.¹⁷

There it is again—a charge to teach *and* to explore. I am in awe of how this charge to develop “budding scientists and scholars in all fields” is being fulfilled. We have recently been ranked number five in the country among all universities for having our students go on to receive a PhD.

These examples of an institutional charge to pursue teaching and research and creative works were made prior to the adoption of our mission statement in 1981, but thereafter the same counsel continued. At the inauguration of President Cecil O. Samuelson, President Gordon B. Hinckley praised the “spirit of fellowship on this campus between teacher and student” and emphasized that we also “must continue to strengthen our scholarship in every discipline that is followed here.”¹⁸

At the installation of President Worthen, President Henry B. Eyring stated, “The vision at the founding [of this university] was that all here will seek truth not for themselves alone but will also distribute what they have learned to bless others.”¹⁹ President Worthen reiterated this dual mission even this morning.²⁰ I may have belabored the point too long, but I hope it is clear that our dual obligation as teachers and scholars is longstanding.

Given that both teaching and research aspirations allow for infinite magnification, we might be tempted to decide that one such infinite project is enough. But there isn’t really peace in that route. How, then—it is fair to ask—are we to navigate between these paired aspirations? As I remarked earlier, I have sometimes yearned for a checklist, but things of such importance rarely work that way. We

are left—and I am convinced we are meant to be left—to learn by our experience.

One navigational star that should resolve some of the tension we sometimes feel is that teaching and research are often mutually reinforcing. This is the core insight behind our mentoring focus. When faculty work closely with undergraduate students in a lab, in a studio, or on a research project, the research itself is a form of teaching.

It should also reduce tension between the dual teacher-scholar aspiration when we recognize that if we want our students to become lifelong learners, we, too, must be engaged in lifelong learning, and research is a key manifestation of our learning passion. Our teaching is also benefited by our engaging in the discipline of performing experiments or writing papers. Most of us have had the experience in which an idea or argument just won't write because our ideas can't survive the discipline of the clear exposition demanded by the written word. I have always appreciated the story of the individual who, when asked what she thought about a particular topic, responded, "I don't know. I haven't written about it yet."

As another tension reducer, President Kimball observed:

You can, in fact, often be more effective in the service you render students if students see you as individuals who have blended successfully things secular and things spiritual in a way that has brought to you earned respect in both realms.²¹

I remember as a student being in awe of the intelligence and credentials of the faculty—I am still in awe of you. I remember taking confidence from their thoughtful and faith-filled testimonies of the restored gospel.

As a final tension reducer, I trust that, if we are faithful, some of the research insights that might otherwise be lost because of time dedicated to teaching can be made up by the blessings of the Spirit. As we learn in Doctrine and Covenants 88:67, "That body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things." But, in my experience, this is not typically the Lord's way. As I noted before, there is a law, irrevocably decreed," and attaining light and knowledge most often is a

function of obedience to the laws of learning and requires significant time, work, and study in addition to faith.²²

If these various truths reduce the tension between teaching and research, do they eliminate it? As suggested by my reference to Doctrine and Covenants 130 and the principle that blessings are associated with obedience to related laws,²³ I don't believe so. In the end, honesty—and at least as much insight as I can muster from my own experience—compels me to recognize that we must make hard choices between teaching and research. We can't have it all.

If we must choose, how is it that we are to do so? Surely it cannot be that we opt for one to the exclusion of the other. I have long appreciated, for example, that at BYU quality teaching really does matter in the rank-and-status process. A long list of publications or performances on a vita or a raft of research grants do not obviate the need for quality teaching.

If choosing only one path is not viable, what principles might help us balance between teaching and research? One principle that President Worthen has invited us to consider is our motive. Is it pride and the praise of the world that drive us, or is it a desire to serve our students and serve the Lord?²⁴ As President Worthen said in his 2014 university conference address:

*We are and will remain a student-centric university, one that focuses on the development of our students above all else. With every major decision we make, we need to ask ourselves how this endeavor can enhance the educational experience of our students.*²⁵

This inquiry about what enhances the experience of our students may appear to suggest a narrow ambit for scholarship, but that is not necessarily so. Consider the close mentoring experience of a student in a lab or studio and think about the doors to graduate school and employment that open as a result of such collaborative work. Contemplate the habits of mind and heart that students are able to observe in a close mentored-research setting. Even for those disciplines in which working alongside students is more challenging, pursuing research teaches lifelong learning by example, energizes the mind of the faculty

member, and builds the university's capacity to launch its students into opportunities that will allow them to serve and lead in their families, their communities, and the Church. Again, motive and our heart matter. If students are at the periphery of our university contribution—or in the rearview mirror—we ought to realign our focus.

To borrow from a metaphor President Worthen used in his inaugural address when he challenged all of us to “go to the mountains,”²⁶ the faculty are both climbers and climbing instructors. As scholars and creators, we hope to summit new and challenging peaks. As teachers, we are charged with teaching our students climbing skills and also filling them with a desire to climb. Teaching climbing is easier if we also love to climb and if we have seen the magnificent vistas afforded by a summit. But our mission is not to spend all our time climbing. Our core mission is to teach climbing skills and, where possible, to make guided forays in which we lead students to the summit with us. Sometimes, of course, this will slow us down. But because of the strength of our students, having them along for the hike can also spur us and energize us, and our mentoring successes suggest that students often can carry quite a bit of the load.

From the evaluative side in the rank-and-status process, we must recognize that the quantity of what we produce—the number of peaks we will climb—will sometimes be less than what might be produced if teaching loads were lower or citizenship obligations less. This should not trouble us because it is inherent in our institutional choice. Although we as faculty might climb fewer peaks, we will be responsible for more summits, achieved by our extraordinary students.

If we recognize that the quantity of what we produce may be less, and even if we trust that motives matter, we will surely still feel some lingering tension about the paired obligation of teaching and research. But I am persuaded that we are meant to confront precisely that tension. It is part of our mission and part of the grand experiment identified by President Hinckley.²⁷

The nature of paired aspirations is that they invite conversation and discussion about an appropriate balance. I hope that will be the case, because we learn when we counsel together. As we counsel together as faculty members, I also hope that the very recognition of

the tension will engender some of the humility President Worthen discussed this morning.²⁸ Part of that humility may be recognizing that our preferred balance may be just that—our preference—and that we need to recalibrate with reference to the other part of our dual duty. It takes real humility to be personally introspective about our motives and about why we may have shied away from either aspiration. But being less defensive, less sure, and more open to letting the Spirit guide our allocation of effort will lead to greater peace in navigating the paired aspiration of teaching and research—or any other duties in apparent tension.

FAITH AND INTELLECT

A second paired aspiration that guides our efforts is the relationship between faith and intellect, or faith and reason. As a matter of doctrine, these two aspirations share a common goal of pursuing truth. As Joseph Smith once said, “One of the grand fundamental principles of ‘Mormonism’ is to receive truth, let it come from whence it may.”²⁹ Latter-day scripture is clear that, to the Lord, “all things . . . are spiritual” and nothing is entirely temporal.³⁰ We also know that “the glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth.”³¹

At the university’s 2015 commencement exercises, Dr. Robert P. George credited Pope John Paul II with a beautiful metaphor: “Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth.”³² This is precisely why we are commanded to “seek learning, even by study and also by faith.”³³

We need not feel embarrassed, as urged in some academic quarters, that our pursuit of truth includes faith, nor is there any lack of faith in pursuing truth by diligent study at a university. I love the story President Henry B. Eyring once told about a conversation he had with President Kimball regarding the future of higher education in the Church.

President Eyring reported that he had suggested to President Kimball that, once the Savior returned, universities may no longer be necessary.

After what President Eyring described as “a lengthy silence,” President Kimball said that

over the centuries universities [have] proved to be the most effective institutions we [have] developed to find, conserve, and transmit knowledge across numerous fields of inquiry, so why not expect that they would serve as well in the Millennium.³⁴

Faith and reason must be paired for us to achieve what President Kimball described as the expectation that not only would BYU “become a leader among the great universities of the world” but “become a unique university in all of the world!”³⁵

President Hinckley echoed this idea when he said at President Samuelson’s inauguration:

Here we are doing what is not done in any other major university of which I am aware. We are demonstrating that faith in the Almighty can accompany and enrich scholarship in the secular.³⁶

Because we are human and the world beckons, we can begin to think it is possible to fly with one wing, but it isn’t. Truth must be pursued by study *and* by faith. Excluding the latter cuts us off from the pursuit of truth. As Psalm 36:9 says, “For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.” Most important, excluding faith would cut us off from the one truth to which all other knowledge is secondary—Christ’s promise in John 8:12: “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

If study and faith are both part of the search for truth, the tension tends to come, as it so often does, in practice—in myriad individual and institutional decisions. Here again, retreating to our comfort zone and eschewing the challenge to learn by both study and faith is not the answer.

What are some principled guides? Once more the real answers are internal—our motives and our heart—and are difficult to reduce to a checklist. If there must be a default, it is faith, partly because faith

will compel us back to the value of study and reason. In this regard, President David O. McKay once said that by making religious faith paramount, this university “declares with Ruskin that ‘anything which makes religion its second object, makes religion *no* object. . . . He who offers God a second place, offers Him no place.’”³⁷

The temptation for many of us who have spent so much time and energy succeeding in Athens is that we sometimes want to rebuild Jerusalem in Athens’s image. But our ultimate aspiration is, metaphorically, to build a New Jerusalem, to, as President Kimball said, “become a unique university in all of the world.”³⁸ Our goal is not to build the same old Athens in a new location. Building a great and unique university is no easy project. Although in many cases the principles of truth that build up Athens will be the same as those that build up Jerusalem, in other cases our pursuit of truth will require that we go our own way and endure the skepticism that what we are building doesn’t match modern Athenian fashion. This doesn’t mean that we proudly ignore advances in building codes that would strengthen our own structures, nor does it mean that we are haughty and prideful in our difference. But what we must remember is that we build for a higher purpose, which requires that we build by both study and faith.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND THEORY

At this point in my remarks, most of you are probably convinced that I have forgotten the theme of this university conference from Doctrine and Covenants 105:10—“That my people may be taught more perfectly, and have experience”—which seems to promise something on experiential learning. So let me turn to that subject for a couple of minutes and to the dual aspiration of teaching by experiential learning and teaching by theory and principle.

In his January 2015 address to the university community, President Worthen identified “three main ways we can learn: one, by study; two, by faith; and, three, by experience.”³⁹ As you will recall, he taught the students:

*Your mortal experience will be a more productive part of your quest for perfection if you intentionally stretch yourself with new challenges, especially those that involve a real risk of failure.*⁴⁰

It is a subject for another day, but his advice is just as critical for faculty. Building this university requires taking on new challenges with some risk of failure and mistakes. We, too, will learn through our experience.

If improving our efforts to provide our students experiential learning opportunities is important, those efforts are bounded and supported by the dual aspiration of education by study and by faith, which in turn focuses on guiding principles and theory. We, of course, are already doing much by way of experiential learning. Our lab disciplines provide many students with wonderful, outside-of-class experiential learning opportunities; our clinical-work disciplines likewise include learning by doing; experiential learning is the core pedagogy in the fine arts; and wonderful experiential learning experiments are going on across campus. Although this may expand the definition beyond typical usage, anyone who has experienced a work of art in an art history class or the text of a poem in a literature class might also lay claim to an experiential learning experience. My point today is not to set boundaries around the definition, although I suppose that will soon enough be my resource-allocation duty.

Instead of boundary setting, my focus, as before, is on the challenging and necessary work we must do to discern the appropriate relationship between teaching practice and teaching theory and to then make the good, better, and best choices between them. In that weighing, teaching theory and guiding principles continues to be critical. As the Aims document suggests, “The essential academic learning skills are the abilities to think soundly, to communicate effectively, and to reason proficiently in quantitative terms.”⁴¹ The aims’ use of the “skills” nomenclature makes clear that the goal is to enable students to apply their learning to the myriad circumstances that will arise in their lives.⁴²

It is principles that have staying power. To take a recent example, it was fun to experience the eclipse. But how much more valuable is

it to understand why the eclipse happened and, even better, to understand the mathematical and physical principles upon which one can predict not just this eclipse but any eclipse in the future? Teaching theory and principles is thus foundational to application. At the same time, it was seeing the eclipse that prompted me to read more about how an eclipse worked. Thus, the desire to understand theory and principle can be fueled by experience.

Our commitment to teach students core academic skills goes to the heart of our teaching mission. In a world in which evanescent celebrity on social media seems increasingly important, we must remain moored to our aspiration of education for eternity. It is not nearly enough to teach students about the hot political issues of the day or the skills they need for their first job. Our task is to teach them the principles by which they will understand and evaluate all future political debate and the skills that will allow them to succeed as employment opportunities change and evolve. Learning true principles is a skill that will last a lifetime—indeed, far longer than that.

Our goal in the scholarly realm is no different. It is certainly the case that much of what we do moves knowledge forward only incrementally and that our work will be surpassed in time by subsequent discovery. But our goal should be enduring influence. Our eye should not be to follow the latest fad or to win a current debate but to discern and share principles in our writing, our art, and our experiments that will resonate even fifty years hence.

Although I admit to a personal lean toward theory and principle, I am convinced that experiential learning must be part of what we teach our students. And my broader point is that we should not feel like anything is amiss if we must collectively wrestle with the dual aspirations of teaching students both by theory and applied learning. We are meant to struggle with this question—not surprisingly—by study, by faith, and by experience.

UNITY AND DIVERSITY

I turn now to a final aspirational pairing about which I won't speak at length today—unity *and* diversity. For us it is not unity *or* diversity

but both unity *and* diversity. We will and should become more diverse. I mentioned previously the importance of counseling together, and diverse perspectives and experiences will be a boon to our effort to discern how best to accomplish our mission and aims. We won't always agree, but we can disagree charitably. By charitable disagreement I mean more than basic civility. Instead of mere civility, which is a baseline obligation, I hope we will listen—really listen—to each other and work to understand one another's views and statements in a charitable light. What an oasis of learning we would be if pursuing light and truth were the goal and if inevitable disagreements were handled with true charity.

The best description of our hope to be both diverse and unified is in our aims document:

*The students, faculty, and staff in this community possess a remarkable diversity of gifts, but they all think of themselves as brothers and sisters seeking together to master the academic disciplines while remaining mastered by the higher claims of discipleship to the Savior.*⁴³

As the aims document suggests, diversity is inherent in the project of a multifaceted university and is consistent with the idea of the pursuit of light and truth. But in the end we must also be “mastered by the higher claims of discipleship to the Savior.” I know we are not perfect in that regard. I surely am not. I suppose we all have plenty of growing to do, both individually and collectively, before we are fully mastered in our discipleship. But if that is true, it is also true that we sometimes forget that what we have is extraordinary.

A couple of years ago I attended this faculty session of university conference with my friend and law school colleague Paul Stancil. Paul is an Evangelical Christian who joined us from the college of law at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. At the end of the session, the faculty members sang together a traditional hymn of Zion. I can't remember which one.

At the end of the singing, I looked over to Paul, and he had tears in his eyes. He said something like, “Do you realize what an

extraordinary place this is—how amazing it is to be a part of a university where the whole faculty will joyfully stand and sing together in faith?”

The truth is that I probably didn’t get it. Paul’s reaction, which I share with his permission, was a powerful reminder of what a unique university we are building together.

One of the great blessings of serving as the academic vice president is that I am exposed to the remarkable and diverse work of colleagues across campus. It makes me feel humbled and proud to be part of this university. Of course, the truth is that the blessings of being part of this faculty community are not limited to someone in the academic vice president position. It can be tempting to stay in our own academic silo, particularly when disciplinary imperatives seem to push us toward narrower specialization, but let me encourage all of us to venture out and partake of the remarkable feast of opportunities that surrounds us.

Attend a colleague’s presentation and revel in his or her mastery of a complex area of knowledge. Even if you don’t see an interdisciplinary angle to support your own work, take joy in gaining a bit more knowledge and in understanding the collective project in which we are engaged. Come to a recital, performance, or production and see what our gifted fine arts faculty and students are accomplishing. Browse or read a few of the impressive books produced every year by our colleagues in book disciplines. And please, when you can, take the time to come to your colleagues’ devotionals. You may not know them; you may never meet them in person (although I hope you will). But learning from them will make you feel that you are a greater part of this community.

I express my gratitude to you for all you do to build our students and to build a great and faithful university. As I said when I began by talking about my childhood summer treks to BYU with my mother, the profoundly important project in which we are engaged is multi-generational in its influence. There is more to do and there are many higher mountains ahead, but I feel blessed to work alongside you in this effort.

As I end, I share one of my favorite passages in the Old Testament, from the book of Numbers, as my prayer for all of us as we navigate the dual aspirations that define our hope for this university:

*The Lord bless thee, and keep thee:
The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:
The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.*⁴⁴

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. See Spencer W. Kimball, “Education for Eternity,” address to BYU faculty and staff, 12 September 1967.
2. See Kevin J Worthen, “BYU: A Unique Kind of Education,” BYU university conference address, 28 August 2017.
3. See the Mission of Brigham Young University (4 November 1981) and the Aims of a BYU Education (1 March 1995).
4. President Gordon B. Hinckley said: “It is a continuing experiment on a great premise that a large and complex university can be first class academically while nurturing an environment of faith in God and the practice of Christian principles” (“Trust and Accountability,” BYU devotional address, 13 October 1992).
5. Dallin H. Oaks, “Good, Better, Best,” *Ensign*, November 2007.
6. See, for example, James 2:17–18.
7. See, for example, Doctrine and Covenants 88:15.
8. See, for example, Dallin H. Oaks, “Two Lines of Communication,” *Ensign*, November 2010.
9. Mission of BYU; emphasis added.
10. Mission of BYU.
11. John Taylor, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1854–86), 21:100 (13 April 1879).
12. Karl G. Maeser, “History of the Academy,” first Founders Day exercises, 16 October 1891; in Reinhard Maeser, *Karl G. Maeser: A Biography by His Son* (Provo: Brigham Young University, 1928), 131.
13. Kimball, “Education for Eternity.”
14. Spencer W. Kimball, “The Second Century of Brigham Young University,” BYU devotional address, 10 October 1975.
15. Kimball, “Second Century.”
16. Kimball, “Second Century.”

17. Harold B. Lee, "Installation of and Charge to the President," in *Addresses Delivered at the Inauguration of Dallin Harris Oaks*, 12 November 1971 (Provo: BYU Press, 1971), 14.
18. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Remarks at the Inauguration of President Cecil O. Samuelson," BYU devotional address at the inauguration of President Samuelson, 9 September 2003.
19. Henry B. Eyring, "A Leader of Learners," BYU devotional address at the inauguration of President Kevin J Worthen, 9 September 2014.
20. See Worthen, "Unique Kind of Education."
21. Kimball, "Education for Eternity."
22. Doctrine and Covenants 130:20; see also verse 21.
23. See Doctrine and Covenants 130:20–21.
24. See Kevin J Worthen, "The Why of the Y," BYU annual university conference address, 26 August 2014; see also Worthen, "Unique Kind of Education."
25. Worthen, "The Why of the Y."
26. Kevin J Worthen, "Enlightened, Uplifted, and Changed," BYU devotional address at his inauguration, 9 September 2014.
27. See Hinckley, "Trust and Accountability."
28. See Worthen, "Unique Kind of Education."
29. Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B.H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1902–32), 5:499 (9 July 1843).
30. Doctrine and Covenants 29:34.
31. Doctrine and Covenants 93:36.
32. John Paul II, Blessing, in Encyclical Letter *Fides et Ratio* (*Faith and Reason*), 14 September 1998, w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html; quoted in Robert P. George, "Faith and Reason: The Appropriation of Knowledge and Truth," BYU commencement address, 23 April 2015.
33. Doctrine and Covenants 88:118.
34. Henry B. Eyring, "A Charted Course," BYU annual university conference address, 27 August 1996.
35. Kimball, "Second Century."
36. Hinckley, "Remarks at the Inauguration."
37. David O. McKay, "The Church University," *Messenger* 11, no. 10 (October 1937): 3; quoting John Ruskin, "Lecture IV: Pre-Raphaelitism," in *Lectures on Architecture and Painting, Delivered at Edinburgh in November 1853* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1854), 204; emphasis in original.
38. Kimball, "Second Century."
39. Kevin J Worthen, "Successfully Failing: Pursuing Our Quest for Perfection," BYU devotional address, 6 January 2015.

40. Worthen, “Successfully Failing.”
41. Aims of BYU.
42. Aims of BYU.
43. Aims of BYU.
44. Numbers 6:24–26.

A UNIQUE LIGHT



There are many ways in which
BYU can tower above 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.

— SPENCER W. KIMBALL



The Church University

DAVID O. MCKAY

♦ *Article in Brigham Young University's Messenger,
October 1937, 3-4*

INTRODUCTION



David O. McKay was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles when he authored this article. Elder McKay believed deeply in the value of Church schools, where students could study all subjects in the light of the gospel, deepen their testimonies, and develop noble character traits. He helped preserve Brigham Young University as an exception to the Church's general policy of divesting itself of Church schools. Later, as Church president, he founded BYU–Hawaii and the Church College of New Zealand.

For further comments on the importance of President McKay's vision to BYU, see Bruce C. Hafen's address "Religious Education in BYU's Prophetic Historical Context" in *Envisioning BYU Volume 1: Foundations and Dreams*.

*It is the aim of the university
to make students **feel** that
life is never more noble
and beautiful than when it
conforms to the principles of
the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

— DAVID O. MCKAY



THE BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY is primarily a religious institution. It was established for the sole purpose of associating with facts of science, art, literature, and philosophy the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Even more specifically, its purpose is to teach the gospel as it has been revealed in this age to the Prophet Joseph Smith and other leaders who have succeeded him. The ideal that should impregnate all university instruction was tersely designated by President Brigham Young when he said to Brother Karl G. Maeser: “Brother Maeser, I want you to remember that you ought not to teach even the alphabet or the multiplication tables without the Spirit of God. That is all. God bless you. Good-bye.”¹

Emphasis on the need of religious education was again given in the year 1888 when the Church added to the parent institution the present system of Church education in order, as was stated, “that we should have schools where the Bible, the Book of Mormon and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants can be used as text books, and where the principles of our religion may form a part of the teaching of the schools.”²

In making religion its paramount objective, the university touches the very heart of all true progress. By so doing it declares with Ruskin that “anything which makes religion its second object, makes religion *no* object. . . . He who offers God a second place, offers him no place.”³ It believes that “by living according to the rules of religion, [a man] becomes the wisest, the best and happiest creature, that he is capable of being.”⁴

I emphasize *religion* because the Church university offers more than mere theological instruction. Theology as a science “treats of the existence, character, and attributes of God,”⁵ and theological training may consist merely of intellectual study. Religion is subjective and denotes the influences and motives to human conduct and duty

which are found in the character and will of God. One may study theology without being religious; one may be religious without being moral; one may be moral without being religious. It is evident, then, that true religious training must include instruction in relation to God and to His laws and government and also in relation to man's duty to man.

Such teaching is given effectively not necessarily in a formal theology class but in literature, art, geology, biology, and other classes. Teachers in the Church university are free to associate with scientific truths the revealed word of God. Thus all facts may be viewed by the students not through the green glass of prejudice or doubt but in the clear sunlight of truth.

It is the aim of the university to make students *feel* that life is never more noble and beautiful than when it conforms to the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

NOTES

1. Brigham Young, quoted in Reinhard Maeser, *Karl G. Maeser: A Biography by His Son* (Provo: Brigham Young University, 1928), 79.

2. Wilford Woodruff and George Reynolds, "A Letter to the Presidency of St. George Stake," 8 June 1888, in *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1833-1964*, vol. 3, ed. James R. Clark (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 168.

3. John Ruskin, "Lecture IV: Pre-Raphaelitism," in *Lectures on Architecture and Painting, Delivered at Edinburgh in November 1853* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1854), 204; emphasis in original.

4. Gilbert Burnet, *Bishop Burnet's History of His Own Time*, vol. 4 (London: Printed for T. Davies, 1766), 456-57.

5. Noah Webster, *Webster's International Dictionary of the English Language*, ed. Noah Porter (Springfield, Massachusetts: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1907), s.v. "theology," 1495.



Why a University in the Kingdom?

NEAL A. MAXWELL

♦ *Article in Ensign, October 1975, 6–9*

INTRODUCTION



As Church commissioner of education during BYU's centennial year (1975), Neal A. Maxwell wrote an article for the *Ensign* magazine explaining why The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints would have a university like BYU. In it he touched on many of the same themes President Spencer W. Kimball articulated in his address "The Second Century of Brigham Young University," emphasizing the need for BYU to remain "deliberately different," even unique, in "meeting its rendezvous with destiny" (page 152). This text has been excerpted.

By being unique in some respects, BYU will make a contribution not only to the kingdom but to all of mankind.

— NEAL A. MAXWELL



IF BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY did only that which other universities do, and in the same way, there would be little reason for the Church to operate it. The traditional roles a university plays—such as transmitting accumulated knowledge from generation to generation, discovering new knowledge through research, and providing various forms of service to mankind—should be and are much in evidence at BYU. BYU must continue to do these things well enough to meet the reasonable standards of the academic world, for as Brigham Young urged, “We should be a people of profound learning pertaining to the things of the world”¹ but without being tainted by “pernicious, atheistic influences.”²

But BYU must do even more: it must also meet the higher standards of the kingdom of God. Clearly, therefore, BYU parallels but is not in the secular stream of American universities; it is instead a unique tributary to mankind that springs from the fountain of the gospel. This paralleling separateness is important to maintain, not only for the Church’s sake but for the sake of society as well, for to imitate the world indiscriminately is not to provide needed leaven for the world.

Originally, occidental universities were tied to religious purposes, and a modern expression of linkage between academia and correct theology is clearly needed. The secularization of so many universities in recent decades has often added to the malaise and loss of purpose that seem to seep through to the marrow of some of these institutions. There is a growing, informal alliance between many educationalists and existentialists, and some counterforce to that tacit alliance is clearly called for.

BYU can provide such counterpoint, because at the Y there is concern over conduct as well as curriculum, concern for developing character in students as well as their competency. How appropriate

this is, since so much recent human misery has resulted from flaws in character and not failures in technology! Further, since students learn so much from each other, the selection of peers is as significant an act as the selection of professors. Thus, in important ways, the human environment at BYU is deliberately different, and self-selection by faculty as well as students who desire such a campus is constantly in evidence.

It is important that there be some pluralism in higher education. The essence of freedom is choice, and choice requires options. It was John Stuart Mill, in his essay “On Liberty,” who noted the practical advantages of pluralism in which individuality is a helpful factor:

*The unlikeness of one person to another is generally the first thing which draws the attention of either to the imperfection of his own type, and the superiority of another, or the possibility, by combining the advances of both, of producing something better than either.*³

The individuality of institutions has corresponding advantages too.

As BYU enters a new era with such uniqueness and with rising academic quality, it is now in a position to turn its face outward to the world without having to explain itself too self-consciously.

In the words of Ezekiel, BYU is in a position to show “the difference between the holy and profane”⁴ in the realm of education, and under the able leadership of President Dallin H. Oaks and highly competent colleagues at all levels, it is meeting its rendezvous with destiny.

BYU’s uniqueness has helped it to avoid some of the major problems of other universities in recent years. For instance, there began in American higher education several decades ago a great academic apostasy from advisement, in which faculties in many universities gave up—quickly and gladly—the role of advisers to students and sought to institutionalize this service in counseling centers. While the latter may be needed, they are not a substitute for what so many students often seek: proximity to professors.

Neither was there the student disenchantment at BYU that occurred on some other campuses in the sixties. This campus is a place where the doctrine of *in loco parentis* is alive and well.

There was no real crisis of purpose at BYU. Neither did BYU suffer from loss of support by alumni, nor was there a gap between the governing board and the BYU faculty—two harsh consequences that emerged elsewhere. The uniqueness of this university will also help it in the future to ride out difficulties that may prove traumatic for some other institutions.

The educational chemistry on BYU's campus, therefore, involves a committed, competent faculty; a committed, competent staff; a committed, competent administration; a special student body; and, certainly, a special governing board. These groups are united on basic values and purposes—an academic adhesive that holds fast under pressure. The blend of these things permits BYU to do uncommon things that cannot be done as easily or as well elsewhere. As the university gains momentum, those who will teach, study, and serve there (in BYU's second century) will both experience and help to preserve this special educational environment.

By being unique in some respects, BYU will make a contribution not only to the kingdom but to all of mankind, including in its resistance to the educational fashions and fads of the time, when those trends are inimical to the interests of mankind.

There is a reported historical parallel involving Admiral Robert E. Peary, who was trying to reach the North Pole years ago. After determining his position, he drove his dog team northward, only to be disappointed by learning later that he was miles farther south than he had been earlier. It became clear that he was northbound on a giant ice floe that was resolutely and rapidly drifting southward. So it is with so many of mankind's sincere secular efforts today. Men can be anxiously engaged but without being engaged in good causes.⁵ If men are not steering by absolute truth, they will drift in the rolling sea of relativism.

The attack on human problems by sincere, scurrying, secular soldiers is sometimes gallant but seldom effective. It is much as Marshall Pierre Bosquet said of the charge of the Light Brigade: "It is magnificent, but it is not war."⁶ We can send generations of students forth to do battle in the war on poverty, but these battles will

be finally won only on the basis of eternal principles—which make possible real solutions, not simply cosmetic applications of anxiety.

The increasingly rigorous academic program at BYU requires and receives the support of the ecclesiastical leaders of the many student stakes there. Church recreational and social activities, for instance, must not be so time consuming that they become a substitute for the improvement of a student's ability to write well.

To communicate, we must speak to men after the manner of their understanding.⁷ In the world of scholarship, the language—but not the jargon—of scholarship needs to be used, and BYU will increasingly reach out to the scholarly world with relevant research growing from the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Just as the Church in pioneer times benefited by the counsel and friendship of a non-member friend, Colonel Thomas L. Kane, so BYU can make friends with the “Colonel Kanes” of the world of letters and intellect—with fine men and women of talent and integrity who may not subscribe fully to the belief system of the kingdom of God but who share many of our values and concerns.

Significantly, in a letter to President Brigham Young on December 4, 1873, Colonel Kane urged the Church to establish its own university rather than have the Church be entirely dependent on sending its youth “abroad to lay the basis of the opinions of their lives on the crumbling foundations of modern unfaith and specialism.”⁸ These individuals are often very perceptive in their own diagnoses of the ills that beset the world. There are conceptual coalitions to be formed; there are clear statements that need to be made about human nature and human behavior; there are insights to be shared and warnings to be given.

The sea breeze of the scriptures must be played on the fevered brow of mankind today if that fever is to be broken. The Church and, therefore, BYU are entering together an era when the “ensign to the nations,”⁹ the “light unto the Gentiles,”¹⁰ will shine forth, and this illumination can be increased by the incandescence of orthodox scholars who can help to illuminate and to warm the path. Men and women are coming—and will come—from many lands to Zion,

including to Zion's university, to ask (in different voices) to be shown the Lord's way.

Since so much of what a university is about involves truth and knowledge, a Christian university would need to pay heed to what Christ has said about those two topics. The Savior said "the key of knowledge" is "the fullness of the scriptures."¹¹ Little wonder that a Church possessed of added scriptures would hear its prophets indicate that being "about [our] Father's business"¹² includes education, especially when that education provides man with his moral foundation so that he can make his way in the world without being overcome by the world. We need not be fearful of facts; nothing lasting will come out of the territory of truth (or appear suddenly on the frontier of fact) that cannot be incorporated with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Most students are naturally believing of the gospel. They are like a young bird who teeters briefly on the edge of the nest (refusing to be agnostic about the law of aerodynamics), then flutters, and finally soars! Purpose-filled and believing students who get wise experience in the management of their time and talents—which is really the management of self—will be sought by a society eager for competent idealists with integrity and industry.

Students in a proper peer group can do so much to help one another learn, including the development of those social skills upon which the governance and maintenance of a free society truly depend, to say nothing of the effectiveness an individual needs in family life.

Thus, BYU can both help to motivate students to want to serve mankind and also provide them with the skills to do so. By understanding the implications of gospel truths, students can be clear-headed about how to work toward desirable change on this planet while simultaneously learning the importance of succeeding in their own families rather than simply charging off quixotically to tilt against windmills while their family perishes at home. Prospective mothers, for instance, deserve the best possible education. As Dr. Charles D. McIver once observed: "When you educate a man, you educate an individual; when you educate a woman, you educate a whole family."¹³

One important caveat: as the Church grows and becomes more and more global, a smaller and smaller percentage of all Latter-day

Saint college-age students will attend BYU or BYU–Hawaii campus (a four-year college) or Ricks (a two-year college) or LDS Business College, each of which is making its own unique contribution to society and the Church, though the latter three institutions are not treated herein. Latter-day Saint students attending other colleges and universities in the United States and around the world number over 100,000, and of these, about 70,000 are attending one of our nearly 500 institutes of religion or are using the self-instruction institute course. Thus, while attending BYU can be a very special experience for its students, that is not the educational route the vast majority of Latter-day Saints will travel. This puts an even greater follow-through responsibility on those who do enroll at BYU.

BYU can, and will, build some academic peaks of unquestionable excellence; several of these are emerging even now. BYU will simultaneously continue to maintain a special environment that permits people to experience how individuals can live together in love and truth and learn through self-reliance to govern themselves by correct principles. Those who have had such an experience will never be satisfied later on with anything less!

The convergent implementation of so many correct principles in the educational enterprise at BYU is not perfectly done; it is, nevertheless, impressively done.

It was said of Rome at her apogee that men did not love Rome because she was great but that Rome was great because men loved her. BYU will earn academic esteem, but the respect and love of the Lord's university by the members of the Church will be a crucial ingredient in the process of BYU's achievement of greatness in its second century!

NOTES

1. Brigham Young, "Remarks," *Deseret News Weekly*, 6 June 1860, 97.
2. Brigham Young, letter to his son Alfales Young, 20 October 1875.
3. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1859), chapter 3, p. 128.
4. Ezekiel 44:23.
5. See Doctrine and Covenants 58:27.

6. Pierre Bosquet, quoted in *Familiar Short Sayings of Great Men*, comp. Samuel Arthur Bent (Boston: Ticknor and Company, 1887), 68.
7. See 2 Nephi 31:3; Doctrine and Covenants 1:24.
8. Thomas L. Kane, letter to Brigham Young, 4 December 1873, 8; in box 40, folder 14, Thomas L. Kane, 1869–1873, Letters from Church Leaders and Others, 1840–1877, Brigham Young Office Files, 1832–1878 (bulk 1844–1877), Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
9. Isaiah 5:26; 2 Nephi 15:26.
10. Doctrine and Covenants 86:11.
11. Joseph Smith Translation, Luke 11:53.
12. Luke 2:49.
13. Dr. Charles D. McIver is often credited with this saying. For an earlier published iteration, see Catherine E. Beecher, *A Treatise on Domestic Economy: For the Use of Young Ladies at Home, and at School*, rev. ed. (Boston: Thomas H. Webb and Company, 1843), 37: “The proper education of a man decides the welfare of an individual; but educate a woman, and the interests of a whole family are secured.”



Installation of and Charge to the President

SPENCER W. KIMBALL

- ◆ *Address at the Inauguration of Jeffrey R. Holland
as BYU President, November 14, 1980*

INTRODUCTION



Spencer W. Kimball was president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when he delivered this charge to new BYU president Jeffrey R. Holland. He repeated many key points from his address “The Second Century of Brigham Young University,” thus fixing his prophetic expectations about BYU’s mission even more deeply into the university. In one paragraph of particular note, President Kimball altered slightly the language from his second-century address, changing *become* unique to *remain* unique (page 164).

*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.”
To that expectation I would
add, “Remain a unique
university in all the world!”*

— 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 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,” 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; see also John Taylor, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1854–86), 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 Kimball, “Second Century.”



Challenges to the Mission of Brigham Young University

DALLIN H. OAKS

♦ *BYU Leadership Conference Address, April 21, 2017*

INTRODUCTION



Dallin H. Oaks was serving as chair of the executive committee of the BYU Board of Trustees and as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles when he delivered this address. He spoke of the challenges BYU faces in becoming a “great university of the Lord—not in the world’s way but in the Lord’s way” (page 169). This talk figured prominently in a speech given a few months later by President Kevin J Worthen, titled “BYU: A Unique Kind of Education” (pages 185–201).

[I] firmly believe that it is the destiny of Brigham Young University to become what those prophetic statements predicted it would become. . . . With your help, it will become the great university of the Lord—not in the world’s way but in the Lord’s way.

— DALLIN H. OAKS



I AM PLEASED TO be here in this important gathering of BYU leaders, whom I last addressed in your BYU leadership meeting in August 2014. As I said there:

[I] firmly believe that it is the destiny of Brigham Young University to become what those prophetic statements predicted it would become. But inherent in being the University of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the reality that this great goal will not be attained in exactly the same way that other universities have achieved their greatness. With your help, it will become the great university of the Lord—not in the world’s way but in the Lord’s way.¹

We love the way President Kevin J Worthen has been stressing the mission statement of this university. That emphasis is essential and timely to resist challenges—both external and internal. I will speak of the external first.

I.

I don’t need to tell you that there are great external pressures for BYU to conform to some laws, regulations, accrediting requirements, and standards of various professional associations that would prevent or impede the attainment of our institutional and Church goals. This is an old problem with which I have had considerable personal experience and which I merely reference here with the words “same-sex dormitories and Title IX.”

President Worthen has spoken of an important cause of such external challenges. For many years, religiously affiliated colleges and universities have been steadily disappearing, some by formal

disaffiliation and some by institutional drift. Today they are a tiny minority without clear definitions to distinguish them from private secular and even public institutions. President Worthen said:

So we don't know how many universities are religiously affiliated. And of those that are, some are headed out the door. And the trend is so strong that Mark Tushnet, who is quite well known in legal education, [is referenced by Robert John Araujo, who] said that any religiously affiliated university "will find it extremely difficult' to maintain this [religious] affiliation if it also seeks to attain or preserve a national reputation." In other words, there are those who say, "You have a choice—you can either be secular or second-rate. Make your choice." Now, this is not a lost cause by any stretch of the imagination, but that's the trend, and we are sort of a countertrend for many reasons.²

These external challenges are mostly being handled by the administration of the university—capably, I am pleased to say—with the understanding and support of the rest of you leaders. We thank you for that.

More good news about our efforts to differ from the world's secular way of education is that we have some friends and supporters, even in secular places. Some unexpected evidence of this was published by David Brooks, the respected *New York Times* columnist.³ Raised in a Jewish home in New York City, Brooks explained, "I've spent much of my life with secular morality. I think the most spiritual institution I would go into is Whole Foods."⁴ As he faced an audience of Christian educators, he reflected on his experience teaching students at Yale University. He said, "My students are wonderful; I love them," but they "are so hungry for spiritual knowledge."⁵ Speaking of those students, Brooks said:

They have a combination of academic and career competitiveness and a lack of a moral and romantic vocabulary that has created a culture that is professional and not poetic, pragmatic and not romantic. The head is large, and the heart and soul are backstage. . . .

I think that God has given us four kinds of happiness. . . . Fourth [is] transcendence—an awareness of one’s place in a cosmic order; a connection to a love that goes beyond the physical realm; a feeling of connection to unconditional truth, love, justice, goodness, beauty and home. . . .

Many of our institutions, and especially our universities, don’t do much to help our graduates achieve that transcendence. But for Christian universities and other religious institutions, this is bread and butter. This is the curriculum. . . . You [Christians] have a way of being that is not all about self. You have a counterculture to the excessive individualism of our age. You offer an ideal more fulfilling and more true and higher than the ideal of individual autonomy. . . .

What I’ve tried to describe is this task of helping young people build the commitments, the foundations of their lives. A lot of the schools I go to do a great job at many other things, but integrating the faith, the spirit, the heart and the soul with the mind is not one of them.⁶

Here, in just a few lines, is one of Brooks’s conclusions—given as he was speaking to Christian educators and something that is fully applicable to BYU:

You guys are the avant-garde of 21st-century culture. You have what everybody else is desperate to have: a way of talking about and educating the human person in a way that integrates faith, emotion and intellect.⁷

II.

Today I wish to concentrate mostly on internal challenges. These are the ones you administer, under the leadership of the university administration. These are the subject of BYU’s 1981 mission statement, which President Worthen has stressed so consistently.

Here I quote from President Worthen’s comprehensive and persuasive first address at the BYU annual university conference in August 2014. I do so with complete approval of his emphasis.

This morning I would like to review with you some of the key principles in our mission statement with the ultimate aim of helping us better understand the great cause in which we are engaged and the ways in which each of us can better carry out our roles in this cause. . . .

At the end of the day, students are the product we produce, to put it in business terms. How they turn out—what they do and, more important, who they are—is the ultimate metric by which our work will be measured. . . .

In short, we are and will remain a student-centric university, one that focuses on the development of our students above all else. With every major decision we make, we need to ask ourselves how this endeavor can enhance the educational experience of our students. . . .

. . . So it is important for us to understand what our role is in the quest for perfection and eternal life in the lives of these students.⁸

Later in his message, President Worthen said:

The mission statement outlines the . . . “major educational goals” we have for our students. The curricular aspects of those goals are outlined in the topic sentences of the three middle paragraphs of the mission statement:

- 1. “All students at BYU should be taught the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”*
- 2. “Because the gospel encourages the pursuit of all truth, students at BYU should receive a broad university education.”*
- 3. “In addition to a strong general education, students should also receive instruction in the special fields of their choice.”⁹*

Let me quote another key paragraph from President Worthen’s message:

If the only insights that students receive on gospel truths are in their religion classes, we will not be that different from other good universities to which an institute of religion is attached. What will truly make us unique—and what we must uniquely do well—is to meet the challenge set forth by President Spencer W. Kimball

[in his great 1967 talk “Education for Eternity”]: “*That every professor and teacher in this institution would keep his [or her] subject matter bathed in the light and color of the restored gospel and have all his [or her] subject matter perfumed lightly with the spirit of the gospel.*”¹⁰

Similarly, in his message to this important group of leaders almost three years ago, President Russell M. Nelson spoke of BYU’s importance to the Church, adding that “at BYU we must ally ourselves even more closely with the work of our Heavenly Father. His goal for eternal life for His children, as stated in Moses 1:39, should be our goal.”¹¹ And the BYU mission statement says, “To succeed in this mission the university must provide an environment enlightened by living prophets.”¹²

To accomplish its mission, BYU must have all parts of its community united in pursuing it. I quote from President Worthen again, this time when he spoke in August 2015:

*I believe that this threefold description [that the students study, the faculty teach, and the staff serve] not only makes clear that every person involved in this enterprise has a role to play but, more important, also describes the threefold responsibility that every person shares no matter what his or her particular role may be.*¹³

All of these instructions are, of course, familiar, but I believe all will agree that we are still knowing them better than we are doing them. There is room for improvement.

III.

Now, in the midst of our long-standing challenges, external and internal, we have a new complexity. Our BYU name is now shared with Idaho and Hawaii and, just recently, with BYU–Pathway Worldwide. Today Brigham Young University not only needs to resist being homogenized by the world but must also avoid being confused with its sister institutions. But beyond that, its familial relationships in

the Church Educational System (CES) require it to be supportive of these other BYUs, even as it must avoid the loss of its own mission by being homogenized from within. Quite a challenge! But you are equal to it, and your leaders in the BYU Board of Trustees and the Church Educational System are aware of it and will be your allies in resolving it.

As we think of BYU's current mission, I like Commissioner Kim B. Clark's nautical analogy. He wrote:

We often talk of BYU as the flagship of CES. And so it is. It is a remarkable institution. A flagship must be excellent in what it does, [but] it belongs to the battle group. Its areas of excellence are defined by the needs, mission, and purpose of the battle group. It is not a ship unto itself.

And, I might add, neither are the other ships in the battle group. Elder Clark continued his analogy:

A flagship university in CES must defer to the Lord, the Spirit, and the prophets of the Lord; make sure that its areas of excellence are aligned with the needs of the Church; and take action to use its expertise and its standing to build up, defend, and protect the Church. BYU is not just affiliated with the Church; it is an institution of the Church. It is the flagship of the Church's system for education.¹⁴

Though a distinct and unique and precious institution in the Church Educational System, BYU will inevitably be affected by a new role for what Elder Clark called the battle group of CES. In November 2015, the Church Board of Trustees approved a new initiative for CES to provide "opportunities for education" for all Church members, wherever organized.¹⁵ Neither that initiative nor the more recent formation of BYU-Pathway Worldwide imply large increases in CES degree programs. But they do imply increases in overall CES enrollments as we pursue new initiatives to help members prepare for and access local educational opportunities and pursue them effectively,

consistent with their needs and circumstances. That enhancement of “opportunities for education” for all Church members will necessarily draw upon the expertise and experience that is unique to Brigham Young University faculty and students.

Neal A. Maxwell made an important statement on this subject while he was Church commissioner of education:

Brigham Young University seeks to improve and “sanctify” itself for the sake of others—not for the praise of the world but to serve the world better.¹⁶

After citing this 1971 quotation from Commissioner Maxwell, in 2015 President Worthen added:

The final requirement, then, is to look for opportunities to share that information with others so that their lives can be better.¹⁷

I say, “Yes!”

I loved what President Worthen said last summer about the announcement of what was to be called BYU–Pathway Worldwide. He got it right, even that early in the game. Said he:

You will shortly hear from Elder Kim B. Clark about a new global initiative in the Church Educational System—an effort to provide learning to Saints and others throughout the world. This initiative is inspiring and will give us the opportunity to magnify the impact of what we do here. However, I believe we can best accomplish that by focusing on our principal and board-directed role, which is to enhance the learning experience of our students in all the ways described in the mission statement. We need not alter or change our focus; we simply need to do well—to do better—what we are already doing and then look for new ways to share.¹⁸

“New ways to share,” of course, contemplates some changes, notably in perspective, as befits the flagship in a fleet whose members must share and be aware of and supportive of the missions of each other and of the mission of the whole.

IV.

In my leadership conference message of August 2014, I encouraged BYU faculty to offer public, unassigned support of Church policies that others were challenging on secular grounds. Note that word *unassigned*. The Church should not have to ask or assign. The duty is inherent in the position.

In 2014 I quoted what our dear friend and associate Elder Neal A. Maxwell said to the BYU President's Leadership Council just a few months before his death:

In a way LDS scholars at BYU and elsewhere are a little bit like the builders of the temple in Nauvoo, who worked with a trowel in one hand and a musket in the other. Today scholars building the temple of learning must also pause on occasion to defend the kingdom. I personally think this is one of the reasons the Lord established and maintains this university. The dual role of builder and defender is unique and ongoing. I am grateful we have scholars today who can handle, as it were, both trowels and muskets.¹⁹

I added then and I add now that

*I would like to hear a little more musket fire from this temple of learning, especially on the subject of our fundamental doctrine and policies on the family. Since our **members** should be defenders of marriage as the union of a man and a woman, as Elder Nelson taught in his [2014] BYU commencement address, we should also expect our **teachers** to be outspoken on that subject.²⁰*

V.

Here is another difficult question. This concerns another aspect of BYU assistance to various subjects of interest to the Church. Three years ago I said:

The Church needs the help of BYU faculty in a variety of ways. If the time required to give that help is not credited appropriately in

department and college faculty evaluations for compensation and promotion, it will not be good for [departments, colleges, or] the university [as a whole].²¹

I am informed that you have made progress on this subject in the last few years but that more needs to be done in some colleges. I urge those of you who need further encouragement to reform the content and sophistication of your efforts in the unique circumstances of this university and to consider this my official encouragement to do so.

Closely related to that subject is an even greater need. As we seek to improve our efforts in the various colleges and departments of the university, and as we seek to help CES with similar needs in its various institutions and programs, the problem of how and what we measure is vital. What we measure will profoundly affect what we emphasize. There is great wisdom in the clever observation that the Saints do what they are *inspected* to do.

As I was preparing this talk, I was reading President John S. Tanner's messages from when he was academic vice president at BYU. I was impressed with this insight:

What do we know about student learning at BYU? The short answer for our accreditors was obviously "not enough." . . .

My deepest fear regarding assessment is that faculty will tailor objectives to measures rather than the other way around. That is, that we will define learning outcomes based on what is easy to measure. This would be a huge mistake because there is often an inverse correlation between what is easy to measure and what is important.²²

This wisdom is related to President Boyd K. Packer's frequent teaching that "what we can't count is usually more important than what we can count." In our Church culture of counting and reporting, I found that teaching challenging, but I did find a way to apply it to sacrament meeting, where we faithfully count attendance but have no way of counting the more important subject of how many really renew their covenants in partaking of the sacrament. My continued struggles with that teaching were helped in a stake conference of the Magna

Utah South Stake many years ago. After I shared President Packer’s teaching, a woman gave me this quote: “Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.”²³ I concluded that if Boyd K. Packer and social scientists were teaching the same principle, it was time I took it seriously. I urge you to take this adaptation to heart and think about its application to the evaluation of student learning and faculty research and publication.

VI.

I conclude with a different question, focused on the central mission of Brigham Young University: How do we balance teaching and research in our predominantly undergraduate university that has significant faculty capacities and desires for research?

I acknowledge at the outset that the subject of research has many definitions and manifestations in different colleges, departments, and disciplines at BYU. These include large differences in the subject matters of research, in the opportunities for publication, and in the problem of how to evaluate different manifestations of research and publication for purposes of faculty status and promotion. I will have little to say about these complexities and diversities but will try to confine myself to principles and generalities that may be useful for administrators who must wrestle with the details.

I begin by quoting some thoughts President John S. Tanner shared here at BYU when he was the academic vice president. He began by quoting these familiar words from President Spencer W. Kimball’s 1967 address “Education for Eternity”:

*In our world there have risen brilliant stars in drama, music, literature, sculpture, painting, science, and all the graces. For long years I have had a vision of the BYU greatly increasing its already strong position of excellence till the eyes of all the world will be upon us.*²⁴

After quoting President Kimball from his 1967 BYU talk, President Tanner said:

President Kimball's words were so audacious as to seem almost unbelievable. . . .

As I reread "Education for Eternity" and the now-familiar charge to become a "refining host" for "brilliant stars," it struck me that President Kimball was thinking primarily about the accomplishments of BYU students, not faculty. . . .

This fact can serve as a salutary reminder for us about the fundamental purpose of scholarship at BYU. It is not, and must never be, to satisfy our own vainglory nor to advance our own careers. Nor even is it solely to advance truth and knowledge, though this is a worthy purpose and one specifically endorsed by BYU's institutional objectives. The primary purpose for the Church's large investment in faculty scholarship and creative work at BYU is to enable us to be a refining host for our students. Hence, we must strive for excellence, as President Kimball said, "not in arrogance or pride but in the spirit of service."²⁵

It is this concentration on our students that is the key to how we judge research at BYU. President Worthen explained it well to me in a recent memo:

For us (at least for me), [research] is an extension of our teaching mission. We do value top-flight research, but not exclusively—nor even primarily—for the discoveries that may result. We value it for the impact it can have on students, both in the way it enhances our teaching and the more direct impact it can have on students' lives if we involve them in that research. In that respect, research ("among both faculty and students," as the mission statement puts it), is, in my mind, just an extension of our teaching role.²⁶

I agree that the kind of research we want at BYU is the kind that benefits our undergraduate students, directly through involving them and indirectly through improving our formal and informal teaching of them. We are not a research institute or a sponsor of discoveries that are primarily motivated to enhance the reputation of the university or its faculty. This does not devalue research but puts it in the context of our mission.

Here I divert into some semiserious characterizations of this principle that are doubtless familiar to some of you. Some who are oriented to the academic world's view of research may say, "No other success in *teaching* can compensate for failure in *research*."²⁷ Some who are oriented to BYU's mission may reply, "No other success in *research* can compensate for failure in *teaching*." If you think these questions do not apply to all colleges in the university, I offer the following application in the college of religion: "Faith without works is dead."²⁸ But I reply, "Works without faith is even dead."

Let us return to the serious and persuasive words of President Worthen, speaking of one aspect of this question in light of the scriptural caution:

"Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men" [Doctrine and Covenants 121:35]. In the academy in particular, there will always be a pull for us to become like others. The prestige lies in doing research that may not be exactly the way we would do it if there were not outside peer pressure. There is pressure to emphasize research more than teaching, to ignore undergraduates. One of the things we need to be constantly concerned about is that our hearts don't get set so much on the things of this world and aspire to the honors of men that we start to drift internally.²⁹

In your 2016 BYU university conference, President Worthen said this:

Similarly, as important as our research may be—and some of it is of enormous importance, some of it life-changing, even lifesaving—it is, in the long run, not as important as the eternal development of our students. I applaud and admire the way so many of you pursue both these ends with full purpose of heart and mind, without sacrificing either. But it is hard work.³⁰

And, I might add, it is extremely difficult and expensive to sustain these dual priorities over time. Most will conclude that it is more effective and more sustainable to pursue the kind of research

President Worthen has defined—part of the teaching mission of the university.

NOTES

1. Dallin H. Oaks, “It Hasn’t Been Easy and It Won’t Get Easier,” BYU leadership conference, 25 August 2014.

2. Kevin J Worthen, “Two Challenges Facing Brigham Young University as a Religiously Affiliated University,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 54, no. 2 (2015): 8; quoting Robert John Araujo, “‘The Harvest Is Plentiful, but the Laborers Are Few’: Hiring Practices and Religiously Affiliated Universities,” *University of Richmond Law Review* 30, no. 3 (May 1996): 718. Araujo was referencing Mark Tushnet, “Catholic Legal Education at a National Law School: Reflections on the Georgetown Experience,” in William C. McFadden, ed., *Georgetown at Two Hundred: Faculty Reflections on the University’s Future* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 322.

3. See David Brooks, “The Cultural Value of Christian Higher Education,” keynote speech given at the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities 40th Anniversary Celebration Gala, Washington, D.C., 27 January 2016; published in *Advance* 7, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 47–52.

4. Brooks, “Cultural Value,” 47.

5. Brooks, “Cultural Value,” 48.

6. Brooks, “Cultural Value,” 48–49, 52.

7. Brooks, “Cultural Value,” 48.

8. Kevin J Worthen, “The Why of the Y,” BYU annual university conference address, 26 August 2014.

9. Worthen, “The Why of the Y”; quoting from the Mission of Brigham Young University (4 November 1981).

10. Worthen, “The Why of the Y”; quoting from Spencer W. Kimball, “Education for Eternity,” address to BYU faculty and staff, 12 September 1967.

11. Russell M. Nelson, “Controlled Growth,” BYU leadership meeting, 25 August 2014.

12. Mission of BYU.

13. Kevin J Worthen, “A Vibrant and Determined Community of Learners and Lifters,” BYU annual university conference, 24 August 2015.

14. Kim B. Clark, memo to Dallin H. Oaks, 12 April 2017.

15. Kim B. Clark, “The CES Global Education Initiative: The Lord’s System for Education in His Church,” Seminaries and Institutes of Religion annual training broadcast, 14 June 2016, [lds.org/broadcasts/article/satellite-training-broadcast/2016/06/the-ces-global-education-initiative-the-lords-system-for-education-in-his-church](https://www.lds.org/broadcasts/article/satellite-training-broadcast/2016/06/the-ces-global-education-initiative-the-lords-system-for-education-in-his-church). See also Neal Buckles, “Three-Semester Pathway Program Changes Name to PathwayConnect,”

PathwayConnect newsroom, pathwaynewsroom.org/three-semester-pathway-program-changes-name-to-pathwayconnect.

16. Neal A. Maxwell, “Greetings to the President,” *Addresses Delivered at the Inauguration of Dallin Harris Oaks*, 12 November 1971 (Provo: BYU Press, 1971), 1; quoted in Spencer W. Kimball, “The Second Century of Brigham Young University,” BYU devotional address, 10 October 1975.

17. Worthen, “Vibrant and Determined.”

18. Kevin J Worthen, “Inspiring Learning,” BYU university conference address, 22 August 2016.

19. Neal A. Maxwell, “Blending Research and Revelation,” remarks at the BYU President’s Leadership Council meetings, 19 March 2004; quoted in Oaks, “It Hasn’t Been Easy.”

20. Oaks, “It Hasn’t Been Easy”; emphasis in original; referring to Russell M. Nelson, “Disciples of Jesus Christ—Defenders of Marriage,” BYU commencement address, 14 August 2014.

21. Oaks, “It Hasn’t Been Easy.”

22. John S. Tanner, “Building a Better House of Learning,” BYU annual university conference faculty session address, 29 August 2006.

23. William Bruce Cameron, *Informal Sociology: A Casual Introduction to Sociological Thinking* (New York: Random House, 1963), 13.

24. Kimball, “Education for Eternity”; quoted in John S. Tanner, “A House of Dreams,” BYU annual university conference faculty session address, 28 August 2007. Spencer W. Kimball similarly used this in both Kimball, “Second Century,” and Spencer W. Kimball, “Installation of and Charge to the President,” address at the inauguration of Jeffrey R. Holland as BYU president, 14 November 1980.

25. Tanner, “A House of Dreams”; quoting from both Kimball, “Education for Eternity,” and from Kimball, “Second Century.”

26. Kevin J Worthen, memo to Dallin H. Oaks, 12 April 2017; quoting Mission of BYU.

27. Compare: “No other success can compensate for failure in the home” (James Edward McCulloch, *Home: The Savior of Civilization* [Washington, D.C.: Southern Co-operative League, 1924], 42); quoted by David O. McKay, in *Conference Reports of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, April 1935, 116.

28. James 2:20.

29. Worthen, “Two Challenges,” 9.

30. Worthen, “Inspiring Learning.”



BYU: A Unique Kind of Education

KEVIN J WORTHEN

♦ *BYU University Conference Address, 28 August 2017*

INTRODUCTION



As president of Brigham Young University, Kevin J Worthen explained to faculty and staff how BYU offers a unique kind of education by linking “faith-based teaching and student-centered research” (page 194). Building on then Elder Dallin H. Oaks’s address “Challenges to the Mission of Brigham Young University” (pages 167–82), given earlier that year, President Worthen articulated how BYU can achieve its “prophetically proclaimed destiny . . . in a way that is different from that by which other universities have achieved their greatness” (page 188).

This talk has been excerpted; for the full text, visit speeches.byu.edu/envisioning-BYU.

This unique combination of faith-based teaching and student-centered research is a key ingredient to the kind of holistic learning and character development that President Kimball called “education for eternity” —the kind of student learning and character development that is at the heart of our prophetically declared destiny.

— KEVIN J WORTHEN



IT IS A PLEASURE to welcome all of you to our annual university conference and a pleasure to see you here. The past year has gone by very quickly—at least for me.

“IN THE LORD’S WAY”

It has been a great year. But there is work still to be done. As our university conference theme for 2017 suggests, we gather together with our outstanding students at this university so that we “may be taught more perfectly, and have experience.”¹ Today I hope to provide some insights—at a general level—on how we might accomplish that goal.

This past April, Elder Dallin H. Oaks, who is not only a former president of the university but is currently the chair of the Executive Committee of the BYU Board of Trustees, addressed the leadership of the university. He began his remarks by repeating what he had said to a similar group of leaders in August 2014, shortly after I became president. I have learned to pay particular attention when prophets, seers, and revelators repeat a message. I have thought much about the following statement that Elder Oaks made on both occasions:

[I] firmly believe that it is the destiny of Brigham Young University to become what those prophetic statements predicted it would become. But inherent in being the University of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the reality that this great goal will not be attained in exactly the same way that other universities have achieved their greatness. With your help, it will become the great university of the Lord—not in the world’s way but in the Lord’s way.²

Three things are apparent in this statement:

1. BYU has a prophetically proclaimed destiny to become a great university.
2. We have a critical part to play in realizing that destiny.
3. We will achieve that goal in a way that is different from that by which other universities have achieved their greatness.

Elder Oaks's statement is remarkably similar to two statements made by President Spencer W. Kimball—one during his landmark second-century address, given while Elder Oaks was BYU president, and the other during the inauguration of BYU president Jeffrey R. Holland. Speaking at the centennial celebration of the founding of this institution in October 1975, President Kimball stated:

As previous First Presidencies have said, and we say again to you, we expect (we do not simply hope) that Brigham Young University will “become a leader among the great universities of the world.” To that expectation I would add, “Become a unique university in all of the world!”³

At President Holland's inauguration five years later, President Kimball repeated the same quote almost verbatim, with nearly the only difference being that instead of saying we should “become” a unique university, President Kimball stated that we should “remain” a unique university.⁴

Note again the three critical elements:

1. BYU has a prophetically declared destiny to become a great university.
2. Those prophets expect—not merely hope—that we will do our part to fulfill that destiny.
3. Achieving that destiny requires that we do things differently from other universities—that we be unique.

WAYS IN WHICH WE ARE UNIQUE

Unique is an interesting word. It means literally “one of its kind”⁵—“*unico*,” we say in Spanish. Something that is unique is not just distinct from some others; it is truly different from them all.

President Kimball used the terms *unique* or *uniqueness* eight times in his second-century address. Given that repetition, as well as the renewed emphasis given the concept by Elder Oaks, I have spent considerable time thinking about how we are and how we should be unique. The latter is more important than the former. There is little point in being different for difference’s sake; that will not help us achieve our prophetically declared destiny. We must be unique in the way the Lord wants us to be unique, in ways that are consistent with our board-approved—which means prophetically approved—mission.

There are at least two key ways in which we are already distinct from most other universities. And when you put these two features together, I believe they make us truly unique in ways that are consistent with our prophetically approved mission.

First, unlike most major private universities that started off as faith-based institutions, BYU has remained closely aligned with and is closely directed by its sponsoring church. As Elder Oaks observed last April:

*For many years, religiously affiliated colleges and universities have been steadily disappearing, some by formal disaffiliation and some by institutional drift. Today, they are a tiny minority without clear definitions to distinguish them from private secular and even public institutions.*⁶

Many of you will be familiar with this phenomenon, which has been well chronicled.⁷ The trend toward secularization is so strong that one scholar has opined that any religious university “‘will find it extremely difficult’ to maintain this [religious] affiliation if it also seeks to attain or preserve a national reputation.”⁸ In other words, many observers today believe that religious universities like ours have

a choice: we can either become secular or second-rate. There is no middle ground.

We resolutely believe that this is a false dichotomy. Though now clearly a minority position, that firm belief that there is a positive connection between faith and learning is shared by a number of institutions, including our sister institutions of higher education in the Church Educational System (CES): BYU–Idaho, BYU–Hawaii, and LDS Business College. Like BYU, each of these schools is fully committed to the proposition that faith enhances rather than detracts from the acquisition and development of truth and knowledge. That commitment is built into every fiber of the institutional structure of all the CES schools, including BYU. And that commitment increasingly distinguishes us all from other universities, even some that maintain a formal religious affiliation.

The second way in which we are distinct from some other universities, however, also differentiates us to a degree from the other CES institutions. While all the CES institutions of higher education share the deep common commitment to the reality of the connection between faith and education, we are the only one of the CES schools that requires, as a fundamental part of our mission, that faculty members excel not only in the classroom but also in the research arena. Thus, while we are first and foremost committed to our students—and to teaching them in the Lord’s way—we also ask faculty members to reinforce and enhance that primary teaching mission with world-class research.

Just as there are skeptics about the ability of a university to be both first-class and faithful, there are also some who question whether a university can maintain both a primary teaching focus and a significant research focus. A recent *Deseret News* editorial noted the difference between world-class research institutions like Harvard and Stanford on the one hand and excellent universities like BYU–Idaho—whose sole focus is on teaching—on the other. The editorial recognized the need for both types of universities in modern society. However, it also noted that schools that focus primarily on research run the risk of losing sight of the well-being and education of their students. The authors then opined:

The solution may be for research institutions to take on more research and teaching schools to become better at teaching. For institutions in the messy middle—schools that fall between top-tier research schools and strictly vocational colleges—leaders would do well to pause . . . and simply ask if increased scholarly production is really worth the price to students.⁹

That observation contains echoes of the earlier noted skepticism about the compatibility of faith and greatness as a university. Just as some would assert that universities will have to choose to be either secular or second-rate, some will assert that schools will have to choose to be excellent at either research or teaching but not both. They will contend that schools in “the messy middle,” in these two regards, are doomed to fail.

I believe that on these two issues—the compatibility of faith and learning and the compatibility of teaching and research—we at BYU are in the messy middle. We are clearly in the thinly populated middle position on these two matters because we reject both the dichotomy between faith and education as well as that between teaching and research. And our position is certainly messy in some ways as we find ourselves straddling two divides that most believe are slipping further and further apart. But being in this precarious position should be reason for hope and not despair, for being in the messy middle on these two issues makes us unique in ways that may allow us to achieve our prophetically declared destiny. As Brené Brown observed in a different context, “The middle is messy, but it’s also where the magic happens.”¹⁰

I believe that when viewed in the light of gospel truths, these two seemingly irreconcilable dichotomies become mutually reinforcing convergences that produce a truly unique kind of education that is part of our prophetically declared destiny.

A LINK BETWEEN RESEARCH AND STUDENT LEARNING

Properly understood, belief in gospel truths and adherence to gospel principles can enhance the kind of learning that marks a great

university. In a speech entitled “Education for Eternity,” given in September 1967, President Kimball noted that one of the things that makes universities great is the ability to produce great artists, writers, and scientists who, in turn, have a profound impact on the world. He then observed how the learning process that produces such luminaries can be enhanced at a university that understands, teaches, and practices the precepts of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

*Take a da Vinci or a Michelangelo or a Shakespeare and give him a total knowledge of the plan of salvation of God and personal revelation and . . . then take a look at the statues he will carve and the murals he will paint and the masterpieces he will produce.*¹¹

Because of our close connection and clear alignment with the Church, we are uniquely positioned to help budding authors, artists, and scientists understand how the plan of salvation can shed illuminating light on every subject they study. And because of our collective commitment to live in accordance with gospel principles, our students and faculty are uniquely positioned to experience the kind of revelatory learning that only the Holy Ghost can provide.

Thus faith-based teaching can produce a kind of learning that makes universities great in the truest sense, thereby providing evidence that, contrary to the assertions of some, faith enhances rather than detracts from true learning.

Similarly, I believe that first-class research can enhance rather than detract from student learning and development. Elder Oaks identified the key to this belief in his remarks at the April 2017 leadership conference. He first noted President Kimball’s assertion that BYU could produce “brilliant stars in drama, literature, music, sculpture, painting, science, and in all the scholarly graces.”¹²

In the 2017 leadership conference, Elder Oaks then quoted John S. Tanner’s insightful observation about President Kimball’s remarkable statement:

As I reread [this] now-familiar charge to become a “refining host” for “brilliant stars,” it struck me that President Kimball was

thinking primarily about the accomplishments of BYU students, not faculty. . . .

This fact can serve as a salutary reminder for us about the fundamental purpose of scholarship at BYU. It is not, and must never be, to satisfy our own vainglory nor to advance our own careers. Nor even is it solely to advance truth and knowledge, though this is a worthy purpose and one specifically endorsed by BYU's institutional objectives. The primary purpose for the Church's large investment in faculty scholarship and creative work at BYU is to enable us to be a refining host for our students.¹³

This inspired linkage between research and student learning does away with the seemingly irreconcilable dichotomy between the two. Research is to be an endeavor “among both faculty and students,”¹⁴ as our mission statement plainly declares. The primary aim for research is student development—a distinctive, if not unique, primary aim for universities that value faculty research so highly.

This type of refining learning and development can best occur when the research is cutting-edge, at the frontiers of knowledge. There is a difference between being in a lab conducting routine experiments with predictable results designed to help students see in action principles they have learned in the classroom—something which many of us experienced in high school—and being part of a team that is seeking a hitherto unknown solution to a pressing problem with real-life implications, such as the discovery of a cure for Alzheimer's disease or the development of a lightweight but impenetrable bulletproof shield. Both of these are inspiring learning experiences in which our students have been involved. As enlightening and instructive as it is to be in a chemistry lab recreating experiments that have already been done, it pales in comparison to the intellectually stimulating, sweat-inducing, spiritually stretching experience of being involved in making a truly new discovery—a discovery that may require and produce revelation about both the matter being studied and the individuals performing the study.

Thus, as our mission statement makes clear, this is a place “where a commitment to excellence is expected”¹⁵—including with respect

to faculty research. And it is also a place where “the full realization of human potential [of our students] is pursued.”¹⁶ First-class research whose focus is on student development achieves both of these aims.

THE CHALLENGES

This uniquely student-focused approach to world-class research is at the heart of our current emphasis on inspiring learning. Faculty-mentored student research on cutting-edge topics is one of the primary focuses of that initiative—an initiative whose aim is clearly and exclusively on student learning. It produces a unique kind of student learning that in some instances can happen only at a place like BYU, where the most important end result is not the discovery of new knowledge or faculty development but student revelation through research.

I believe this unique combination of faith-based teaching and student-centered research is a key ingredient to the kind of holistic learning and character development that President Kimball called “education for eternity”—the kind of student learning and character development that is at the heart of our prophetically declared destiny.

However, this lofty view of our potential should not obscure the reality that such an endeavor is not easy. We are in the messy middle on these two key issues. And that position is sometimes precarious and almost always difficult and soul stretching. Elder Oaks identified some ever-present challenges that this unique combination of faith-based teaching and student-centered research brings with it. Let me discuss three of them, and let me commend to you a reading of Elder Oaks’s entire talk for an understanding of others he identified.

First Challenge: Combining Learning with Faith

Combining faithfulness with learning—and research with teaching—requires a lot of extra effort. Our commitment to faith-based teaching requires, as President Kimball observed, “that every professor and teacher in this institution . . . keep his [or her] subject matter bathed in the light and color of the restored gospel and have all his [or her] subject matter perfumed lightly with the spirit of the gospel.”¹⁷

That is not an easy task. It requires a thorough understanding of not only our disciplines but also the scriptures. It requires that we be worthy of the companionship of the Holy Ghost because revelation to our students in the classroom often requires revelation to a faculty member in class preparation. And revelation does not come cheap. As President Kimball observed, “Perspiration must precede inspiration.”¹⁸

Similarly, it is not always easy to keep the focus of research on student learning. Faculty members must be passionate enough about both discovery and their discipline to produce the energy needed to sustain their research through its inevitably difficult stages when no answers seem to be available. But at the same time, they must not become so overzealous to make a new discovery that students become mere instruments in the process rather than the desired end. Again, maintaining this balance requires extra effort.

Furthermore, as Elder Oaks noted, there is in these matters a challenge for the administration. We need to properly recognize and incentivize both faith-based teaching and student-centered research—something that is quite difficult. It is easy to count the number of publications that research produces; it is much more difficult but more important to evaluate how much impact the research endeavor has on the students. Thus, achieving our goal in the unique way we desire will require ongoing and constant extra effort on every level.

Second Challenge: Guarding Against Pride

A second ever-present challenge to maintaining both our faithfulness in teaching and our student-oriented focus in research is the reality that neither of these things is likely to bring us much of the praise of the world. And for most of us, including me, the allure of that praise is ever present and ever powerful. Moreover, when we mark ourselves as unique, we can easily become arrogant. We must constantly guard against the pitfall of pride.

In his classic April 1989 general conference address, President Ezra Taft Benson reminded us that “pride is a damning sin in the true sense of that word. It limits or stops progression.”¹⁹ That is true of individuals and it is true of institutions, including this university. Pride can become a—in fact, *the*—great stumbling block.

Pride is not always easy to discern, as it is an internal attitude that does not always manifest itself externally. As President Benson observed, “Our motives for the things we do are where the sin [of pride] is manifest.”²⁰

Therefore, one key to our success will be having the right motivation. If we are motivated solely by pride, we will fail. So then what should motivate us? President Benson noted that the essence “of pride is enmity—enmity toward God and enmity toward our fellowmen.”²¹ If the essence of pride is enmity—or hatred toward our fellowmen—the antidote to pride would seem to be the opposite of enmity, which is charity, or perfect love for our fellow beings.

Thus we will fully achieve our goal only if we are motivated more by charity than by pride and more by a desire to help our students than by a desire to compare favorably with our peers. The difficulty is that, as noted, motivation cannot easily be measured—at least not by other human beings. Only we—and God—know what truly motivates us. Moreover, the temptation to gratify our vain ambition is so constant that we will likely never reach the point at which we can say that we are sufficiently humble and charitable and that we need not worry about those issues anymore. Self-inspection that is sincere enough to produce personal revelation from God is required. And it is required daily.

It is not unlike the observation of Thomas L. Shaffer, who, in an excellent book-length analysis of whether it is possible to be a Christian and a lawyer, concluded that the complexities of law and life are so great and the temptation to deviate from Christian values while practicing law are so constant that the answer to that question must always remain contingent. Said he:

*I often think that the only way to be both a Christian and lawyer is to ask, every day, “Is it possible to be both a Christian and a lawyer?” and to be open, every day, to the thought that it is **not** possible.²²*

Similarly, perhaps the only way we can remain sufficiently humble and charitable is to ask ourselves, every day, the question “Am I

sufficiently humble and charitable?” And we need to be open, every day, to the thought that we may not be.

Third Challenge: Uniting as a University Community

Elder Oaks noted, “To accomplish its mission, BYU must have all parts of its community united in pursuing it.”²³ Prophets have set forth an ambitious agenda for this university and for those involved in it. It is not an easy agenda, and it will require all of us to change and to work together—not just in one department or in one college and not just among the faculty. We will need everyone on this campus to be committed to the task, because we *are* in the messy middle, and all of us from time to time will need reminders that it is in the messy middle that magic—no, miracles—happens.

As noted, none of this will be easy, but it will be enlivening, exhilarating, and, yes, ethereal. At times we will need to forge new paths. That is what uniqueness is all about. But the impact will be larger than we may think. Let me illustrate with one final example.

Six years ago a group of engineering students engaged in a capstone project involving the creation of a water-well drill to help people in Tanzania obtain an ongoing source of clean water. The lack of clean water is a major cause of disease and poverty in many countries, including several in Africa.

The project began when John Renouard, a BYU alum who had majored in finance, traveled to Africa with his family. John was profoundly moved by the plight of those who did not have access to clean water. He formed an organization called WHOlives—with the word *WHO* standing for water, health, and opportunity. Through a series of events I will describe after showing a video, John connected with the BYU College of Engineering and Technology. Then a group of students, working with their faculty mentor, set out to address the problem. All they knew was that they needed to have a drill that was human powered, could be easily transported from village to village without large trucks, and could drill down hundreds of feet through different kinds of material. They were undergraduates doing research with profound real-life consequences under the tutelage of a faculty mentor. Let me share their story. [A video was shown.]

The last sentence of our mission statement says, “We believe the earnest pursuit of this institutional mission . . . will greatly enlarge Brigham Young University’s influence in a world we wish to improve.”²⁴ What we have just seen is exhibit A. Hundreds of thousands of people in twenty-three countries have access to clean water because of the efforts of these undergraduate students. But, of equal importance—maybe of more importance—the lives of the students, and others, were also profoundly changed.

One of the students, Kenneth Langley, went on to receive his master’s degree in fluid dynamics and is currently working on his PhD at the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology in Saudi Arabia. He indicated that when he began studying engineering, he just wanted to work on airplanes, but being involved in this humanitarian project changed his career focus. It also changed his outlook:

Had I not gone to Tanzania as part of my capstone project, I would never have had the courage to make the step to go to Saudi Arabia, where I am now. Going on that trip also gave me a desire to learn more about the world and to get to know more people in different parts of the world.

Another student, Nathan Toone, who is now working as an engineer for Boeing in St. Louis, explained another profound way in which students were affected:

It was a spiritual experience. There was a lot of inspiration and there were prayers answered that allowed us to even get the drill to Tanzania. And once there, there were other little miracles in that we would meet the right person or we would just have happened to find this drilling expert who showed us where we could find water and happened to make this connection over here with a farmer who had a field that we could drill in. All these little things appeared to be coincidences, but we knew that they weren’t. We knew that there was something bigger going on that was helping our success.

That this was a work of inspiration had been clear at the outset to John Renouard, the BYU alum whose desire to bless the people

of Africa was the genesis of the program. As I have mentioned, John started his organization WHOlives shortly after traveling to Africa with his family and seeing the need for clear water. But he didn't know exactly what he needed to do at that point. He went online and saw a brick-making machine that, it turned out, had been developed in an engineering capstone project at BYU. With that in mind, John called the capstone office, was informed that the responsible person was out of town, and then left his number. John described what happened a few weeks later:

In the middle of the night, I had a dream. It was strong enough that it got me out of bed to my kitchen table to write down what I had seen. Intuitively, I knew that it was a drill, but I am not a well driller. I was a finance major, and I lived in Southern California. My water came from a tap. But I knew that this was something that I needed to jot down. That was the first miracle. The next one happened the next day when I got a call from the BYU capstone program asking me if I had a program or a project that they could work on.

John then met with faculty from the engineering program to explain the need that he had observed in Africa. But he did not give them his specific drill ideas. As he put it:

One of the great concepts of capstone projects is that you don't go to the students and tell them, "Go build this," and then give them the schematics and everything. You tell them, "This is what we want to do. Now go and do it."

After several months of work by the students, John received a text. As John explained:

The text said, "We sent you a CAD drawing. Can you open it?" And I did. When I opened it, I saw that drill, and I recognized it from my dream. It was like, "There it is! How did they do that?" It was amazing.

Inspiring learning—this is the kind of learning that can “assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life”²⁵ by helping them see the hand of the Lord operating in their lives. It is a unique kind of education that faith-based teaching and student-centered research can produce.

I bear my witness that this university has a prophetically declared destiny. It is part of the rolling forth of the kingdom of God on earth. May each of us have the courage, vision, and faith needed to do those things that the Lord expects of us in moving this work along in my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 105:10.
2. Dallin H. Oaks, “Challenges to the Mission of Brigham Young University,” BYU leadership conference, 21 April 2017; quoting his own words from “It Hasn’t Been Easy and It Won’t Get Easier,” BYU leadership conference, 25 August 2014.
3. Spencer W. Kimball, “The Second Century of Brigham Young University,” BYU devotional address, 10 October 1975; see also excerpted text in Kimball, “Climbing the Hills Just Ahead: Three Addresses,” in John W. Welch and Don E. Norton, eds., *Educating Zion* (Provo: BYU Studies, 1996), 75.
4. See Spencer W. Kimball, “Installation of and Charge to the President,” address at the inauguration of Jeffrey R. Holland as BYU president, 14 November 1980; see also excerpted text in Welch and Norton, *Educating Zion*, 78.
5. Merriam-Webster.com, s.v. “unique.”
6. Oaks, “Challenges to the Mission.”
7. See, for example, James Tunstead Burtchaell, *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from Their Christian Churches* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1998).
8. Robert John Araujo, “‘The Harvest Is Plentiful, but the Laborers Are Few’: Hiring Practices and Religiously Affiliated Universities,” *University of Richmond Law Review* 30, no. 3 (May 1996): 718; referencing Mark Tushnet, “Catholic Legal Education at a National Law School: Reflections on the Georgetown Experience,” in William C. McFadden, ed., *Georgetown at Two Hundred: Faculty Reflections on the University’s Future* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 322.
9. *Deseret News* editorial board, “In Our Opinion: More Colleges Should Consider the BYU–I Model and Put Education First,” Opinion, *Deseret News*, 3 August 2017, deseret.com/2017/8/3/20616839/in-our-opinion-more-colleges-should-consider-the-byu-i-model-and-put-education-first.

10. Brené Brown, *Rising Strong: How the Ability to Reset Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead* (New York: Random House, 2017), 28.

11. Spencer W. Kimball, “Education for Eternity,” address to BYU faculty and staff, 12 September 1967; see also excerpted text in Welch and Norton, *Educating Zion*, 62.

12. Kimball, “Second Century”; see also excerpted text in Welch and Norton, *Educating Zion*, 67. Quoted in Oaks, “Challenges to the Mission.” Spencer W. Kimball similarly used these words in both “Education for Eternity” and “Installation of and Charge”; see also corresponding excerpted text in *Educating Zion*, 55, 77.

13. John S. Tanner, “A House of Dreams,” BYU annual university conference faculty session address, 28 August 2007; quoting Kimball, “Installation of and Charge.” Quoted in Oaks, “Challenges to the Mission.”

14. The Mission of Brigham Young University (4 November 1981).

15. Mission of BYU.

16. Mission of BYU.

17. Kimball, “Education for Eternity”; see also excerpted text in Welch and Norton, *Educating Zion*, 54.

18. Kimball, “Second Century”; see also excerpted text in Welch and Norton, *Educating Zion*, 72.

19. Ezra Taft Benson, “Beware of Pride,” *Ensign*, May 1989.

20. Benson, “Beware of Pride.”

21. Benson, “Beware of Pride.”

22. Thomas L. Shaffer, *On Being a Christian and a Lawyer: Law for the Innocent* (Provo: BYU Press, 1981), 175; emphasis in original.

23. Oaks, “Challenges to the Mission.”

24. Mission of BYU.

25. Mission of BYU.



“Look unto Me in Every Thought; Doubt Not, Fear Not”

DAVID A. BEDNAR

♦ *BYU Leadership Meeting Address, April 16, 2021*

INTRODUCTION



David A. Bednar was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles when he delivered this address and spoke of Joseph Smith’s promise that the work of the Lord will go forward. Elder Bednar encouraged BYU’s leaders to “look unto [the Savior] in every thought; doubt not, fear not” (Doctrine and Covenants 6:36). He emphasized that looking without fear to God rather than to the world means heeding President Spencer W. Kimball’s repeated warnings to “resist anything that would rob BYU of its basic uniqueness in its second century” (“The Second Century of Brigham Young University”). Elder Bednar invited the campus community to remember and apply President Kimball’s counsel.

This talk has been excerpted; for the full text, visit speeches.byu.edu/envisioning-BYU.

We should not simply follow the established or emerging patterns of other universities to address the challenges we do now and will yet face. We can, we should, and we must look unto the Savior in every thought to find every solution and to make every decision.

— DAVID A. BEDNAR



I AM GRATEFUL to be with you this morning. Susan and I always love returning to the Brigham Young University campus.

I pray the Holy Ghost will enlighten and edify all of us as we consider together the importance of looking to the Savior in all that we think and all that we do.

THE BLESSINGS OF A CHALLENGING YEAR

For all of us, the past year has been unlike any other year that we have ever experienced. Individuals, families, and the Lord's restored Church have faced great uncertainty and challenging constraints. Customary lifestyles have been altered dramatically, and some of our most cherished opportunities for worship and service have been curtailed and even halted.

But we also have been blessed to learn remarkable lessons about ourselves, our families, our communities, and the things that should matter most in our lives. Constraints have compelled us to discover inspired and improved ways of overcoming, learning, adapting, prioritizing, serving, working, and ministering.

The apostle Paul aptly described some of the juxtaposed conditions we face in our contemporary world:

*We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;
Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.*¹

I personally find great reassurance in the well-known statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith:

The Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done.²

THE BLESSINGS OF CHALLENGING YEARS YET TO COME

Now, please permit me to be personal as I set the stage for the next point I want to emphasize.

Susan and I are the parents of three sons. As these boys were growing up, they all loved and participated in sports of every kind. And for our family, March Madness and the NCAA basketball tournament every year always was a highlight. We each carefully researched and filled out our brackets. The trash talking started early. And the winner of our annual competition was granted special recognition and privileges for the remainder of the year. We still participate in this fun tradition with our sons, their wives, and all of our nineteen grandchildren.

Over the years, Susan became especially skillful at picking the winners and losers. In a majority-male household, she delighted in and absolutely relished beating the rest of us almost every year. She continues to derive great satisfaction from her victories to this very day!

My customary enjoyment of March Madness this year, however, was interrupted by an episode that is instructive for all of us. The basketball team from Oral Roberts University, a Christian university located in Tulsa, Oklahoma, shocked the sports world by defeating powerhouse teams from the Ohio State University and the University of Florida in the early rounds of the tournament. The ensuing publicity emphasized the Cinderella-like story of the team's success.

However, on March 23, an opinion column was published in *USA Today* with the headline "Oral Roberts University Isn't the

Feel Good March Madness Story We Need.” The article concluded as follows:

There is no way to separate their men’s basketball team from the dangers of their religious dogma, no matter how many top seeds they defeat.

Often, athletic accomplishments and victories on the court make up for moral failings all the time. In this case though, whatever the Oral Roberts men’s basketball team manages to do on the court can’t obscure the dangerous and hateful ideology of its core institution. It’s always nice to root for the underdog, but in this case, there’s very little to actually cheer about.³

Then, on March 25, a second opinion article was published in *USA Today* with the title “No, Oral Roberts University Basketball Doesn’t Deserve to Be Canceled from NCAA Sweet 16.” The article begins with this statement:

In the age of social media hot takes, apparently, we aren’t allowed to enjoy good things. Even a good sports story has to become a flashpoint in our ongoing cultural battles.⁴

The conclusion of this episode is still being written. And I believe this story and many others like it inexorably and inevitably will impact Brigham Young University and each of you—in both expected and unexpected ways.

Cancel culture is not new. Lucifer attempted to cancel the Eternal Father’s plan of happiness and the mission of the Redeemer, even the Lord Jesus Christ. The Pharisees and scribes sought to cancel the teachings, influence, and life of the Savior. Critics, apostates, and enemies relentlessly attempted to cancel Joseph Smith. Cancel culture is not new; it always has been and always will be with us until the Savior returns to the earth to rule and reign in righteousness.

But “no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing”!

LOOK TO THE SAVIOR

I believe we will be able to discern the blessings in the challenges yet to come as we “look unto [the Savior] in every thought; doubt not, fear not.”⁵

The Lord Jesus Christ is the ultimate and enduring source of light and truth that enables us to press forward through the increasing and intensifying latter-day distractions, diversions, and commotion. He also is the fount of the solace that can soothe our souls.

After the Crucifixion of the Savior, “Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them”⁶ discovered the stone rolled away from the sepulchre wherein the Lord’s body had been placed:

*And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.
And it came to pass, as **they were much perplexed** thereabout,
behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:
And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the
earth, they said unto them, **Why seek ye the living among the dead?**
He is not here, but is risen: **remember how he spake unto you**
when he was yet in Galilee,
Saying, **The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of**
sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.
And they remembered his words.⁷*

In this episode we learn that the perplexity experienced by these noble women began to be relieved as they responded to the admonition to look to and seek Jesus and remember His words. As we confront the prophesied challenges of our day, I believe that same pattern “will aid me and you In the glorious cause of truth.”⁸

“Look unto [the Savior] in every thought; doubt not, fear not.”

Recall how Alma emphasized a similar theme of looking to God as he taught and testified to his son Helaman:

*O my son, do not let us be slothful because of the easiness of the way; for so was it with our fathers; for so was it prepared for them, that **if they would look** they might live; even so it is with us. The way is prepared, and **if we will look** we may live forever.*

*And now, my son, see that ye take care of these sacred things, yea, see that ye **look to God and live**. Go unto this people and declare the word, and be sober.⁹*

As disciples of the Savior and members of His restored and living Church, we have a distinctive responsibility to look to Him, to listen to His words, to learn from Him, and to walk in the meekness of His spirit.¹⁰ As we do so, we will witness again and again that His ways and the work of His servants typically differ from and, in many instances, contradict secular philosophies and patterns and long-established traditions.

In my study of the Book of Mormon, I often pay particular attention to the ways the Nephites prepared for their battles against the Lamanites. I have noted that the people of Nephi “were *aware of the intent* of [their enemies], and therefore they did prepare to meet them.”¹¹ The following description from Alma 49 is particularly relevant for us this morning:

*Behold, to [the Lamanites’] uttermost astonishment, [Captain Moroni and his armies] were prepared for [the Lamanites], **in a manner which never had been known among the children of Lehi.**¹²*

Brothers and sisters, this is not simply an interesting historical account. Precisely because the Book of Mormon was written for our day, we can learn valuable lessons from the voices that speak to us from the dust and then prepare to meet our trials and difficulties, whatever and wherever they may be, “in a manner which never had been known.”

“Look unto [the Savior] in every thought; doubt not, fear not.”

BYU’S SECOND CENTURY

We should not simply follow the established or emerging patterns of other universities to address the challenges we do now and will yet face. We can, we should, and we must look unto the Savior in every thought to find every solution and to make every decision. At BYU

we can truly focus on the spiritual and practical substance of solutions and not just on superficial symbolism. We should be unique in striking at the root of important and timely issues and not be merely one of the thousands hacking at the branches. By looking unto the Lord, we can fulfill our remarkable role and responsibility “in a manner which never had been known.”

Brigham Young University has a most distinctive mission and purpose:

*The mission of Brigham Young University—founded, supported, and guided by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—is to assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life.*¹³

As described in the Aims of a BYU Education:

The founding charge of BYU is to teach every subject with the Spirit. It is not intended “that all of the faculty should be categorically teaching religion constantly in their classes, but . . . that every . . . teacher in this institution would keep his [or her] subject matter bathed in the light and color of the restored gospel.”

*This ideal arises from the common purpose of all education at BYU—to build testimonies of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. A shared desire to “seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:118) knits BYU into a unique educational community. The students, faculty, and staff in this community possess a remarkable diversity of gifts, but they all think of themselves as brothers and sisters seeking together to master the academic disciplines while remaining mastered by the higher claims of discipleship to the Savior.*¹⁴

As I was thinking about the mission of BYU and preparing for this opportunity to speak with you today, a wonderful memory came to my mind.

On October 10, 1975, I was twenty-three years old, recently married, and a senior at BYU. That day I attended the weekly devotional and listened to President Spencer W. Kimball deliver his landmark

message “The Second Century of Brigham Young University.” Among the Church and university leaders seated on the stand were Neal A. Maxwell, the commissioner of Church education, Dallin H. Oaks, the president of the university, and Jeffrey R. Holland, the dean of Religious Instruction.

President Kimball’s instruction that day was inspiring, edifying, and prophetic. He reviewed key aspects of the university’s first century of service and described both opportunities and challenges for the university’s second century. Listening to the president and prophet of the Lord’s restored Church that day was a historic event and a most memorable experience for me.

We are approaching the halfway mark of the second century of BYU, and I believe it is an appropriate time to consider where we are and what may be coming next.

As I recently reread and studied President Kimball’s address, I selected for us to review six of his statements about the responsibilities we bear today. I will read the quotes and provide no commentary. President Kimball’s vision for, aspirations about, and warnings to Brigham Young University speak for themselves.

As I read these quotations, I invite you to consider how these teachings apply to both individuals and the institution.

Statement 1: “I see even more . . . a widening gap between this university and other universities, both in terms of purposes and in terms of directions.”¹⁵

Statement 2: “We hope that our friends, and even our critics, will understand why we must resist anything that would rob BYU of its basic uniqueness in its second century. . . .

“As the late President Stephen L Richards once said, ‘Brigham Young University will never surrender its spiritual character to sole concern for scholarship.’ BYU will be true to its charter and to such addenda to that charter as are made by living prophets.”¹⁶

Statement 3: “This university is not of the world any more than the Church is of the world, and it must not be made over in the image of the world.”¹⁷

Statement 4: “It is the truth that sets men free. BYU, in its second century, must become the last remaining bastion of resistance to 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, in its second century, must continue to resist false fashions in education, staying with those basic principles that have proved right and have guided good men and women and good universities over the centuries. This concept is not new, but in the second hundred years we must do it even better.

“When the pressures mount for us to follow the false ways of the world, we hope in the years yet future that those who are part of this university and the Church Educational System will not attempt to counsel the board of trustees to follow false ways.”¹⁸

Statement 5: “Education on this campus deliberately and persistently concerns itself with ‘education for eternity,’ not just for time. The faculty has a double heritage that they must pass along: the secular knowledge that history has washed to the feet of mankind along with the new knowledge brought by scholarly research, and also the vital and revealed truths that have been sent to us from heaven.”¹⁹

Statement 6: “Gospel methodology, concepts, and insights can help us to do what the world cannot do in its own frame of reference.

“In some ways the Church Educational System, in order to be unique in the years that lie ahead, may have to break with certain patterns of the educational establishment. When the world has lost its way on matters of principle, we have an obligation to point the way. We can, as Brigham Young hoped we would, ‘be a people of profound learning pertaining to the things of the world,’ but without being tainted by what he regarded as ‘the pernicious, atheistic influences’ that flood in unless we are watchful. Our scholars, therefore, must be sentries as well as teachers!”²⁰

“THEREFORE, WHAT?”

This morning my intent has been to (1) summarize a few of the blessings of a challenging year that is now behind us, (2) discuss the blessings of the challenging years that are before us, (3) emphasize

the essential importance of looking to the Savior in every thought, doubting and fearing not, and (4) consider the distinctive mission of Brigham Young University and reflect on the second century of this university using the teachings of President Spencer W. Kimball. I hope something that has been repeated, rereviewed, or reinforced today will lead to additional pondering, praying, and counseling together and to inspired action.

I have said and provided nothing new. And I am quite sure you are not surprised that a member of the Twelve has reminded all of us to look to and learn from the Savior. I simply and sincerely pray the reminder is timely and helpful.

In my university conference address at BYU in 2017, I described how President Boyd K. Packer often would ask during our discussions in the Quorum of the Twelve, “Therefore, what?”²¹

I understood his question to mean, “So what spiritually significant difference will this idea, proposal, or course of action make in the lives of Church members? Will it really bless those whom we serve?”

President Packer was inviting us to consider the value and long-term implications of the matter about which we were counseling. I have found the question “Therefore, what?” to be most helpful in focusing my thinking about an issue and in identifying the things that matter most.

So you may be asking, “Brother Bednar, what is the ‘therefore, what?’ of your message to us?” My answer to my own question comes in the form of several questions that may serve as spiritual catalysts to individual and collective reflection, evaluation, and action.

The following questions are intended to be illustrative; they certainly are not exhaustive. I am confident that as you continue to ponder and pray about the issues we have addressed this morning, you will identify and pose far better questions and receive inspiration to find the needed answers.

Question 1: At BYU in the second half of the second century, will the light and image of the Savior shine ever brighter in our countenances, in our thinking, in our teaching, and in our scholarly

work and writing—and thereby provide needed illumination in a darkening world?

Question 2: At BYU in the second half of the second century, will we employ more effectively “gospel methodology, concepts, and insights” to address the root causes of significant problems—and thereby do what the world will not or cannot do in its own frame of reference?

Question 3: At BYU in the second half of the second century, will we become ever more vigilant and valiant as both sentries and teachers—and thereby stand firm against any and all influences that would diminish the university’s fundamental uniqueness?

Question 4: At BYU in the second half of the second century, will we look to the Savior in every thought—and thereby doubt not and fear not?

PROMISE AND TESTIMONY

I commend you for your righteous desires and devoted service. Surely, the second half of the second century of Brigham Young University will require the best of all of us—and then some.

As an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, I invoke these blessings upon you, that as you look to the Savior and trust in Him, you will be blessed with hope to overcome perplexity, with spiritual settledness to cut through commotion, with ears to hear and a heart to always remember the word of the Lord, and with the discernment to see things as they really are.

I joyfully declare my witness that Jesus Christ is the Beloved, the Only Begotten, and the living Son of the living God. I witness that He is divine, that He is real, and that He lives. The tomb is empty, for He is risen—and He lives.

I testify that the Eternal Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith, thus initiating the Restoration in the dispensation of the fullness of times. And brothers and sisters, I witness that the Restoration is ongoing.

I declare my witness and invoke these blessings upon you in the sacred name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. 2 Corinthians 4:8–9.
2. Joseph Smith, letter to John Wentworth, “Church History,” *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 9 (1 March 1842): 709; text modernized; see also Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1902–32), 4:540 (1 March 1842); Joseph Smith, “The Wentworth Letter,” *Ensign*, July 2002.
3. Hemal Jhaveri, “Oral Roberts University Isn’t the Feel Good March Madness Story We Need,” Opinion, For the Win, *USA Today*, 23 March 2021, ftw.usatoday.com/2021/03/oral-roberts-ncaa-anti-lgbtq-code-of-conduct.
4. Ed Stetzer, “No, Oral Roberts University Basketball Doesn’t Deserve to Be Canceled from NCAA Sweet 16,” Opinion, *USA Today*, 25 March 2021, usatoday.com/story/opinion/2021/03/25/oral-roberts-university-basketball-deserve-cancel-culture-golden-knights-column/6994502002.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 6:36.
6. Luke 24:10.
7. Luke 24:3–8; emphasis added.
8. “Let Us All Press On,” *Hymns* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2002), no. 243.
9. Alma 37:46–47; emphasis added.
10. See Doctrine and Covenants 19:23.
11. Alma 2:12; emphasis added.
12. Alma 49:8; emphasis added.
13. The Mission of Brigham Young University (4 November 1981).
14. The Aims of a BYU Education (1 March 1995); quoting Spencer W. Kimball, “Education for Eternity,” address to BYU faculty and staff, 12 September 1967.
15. Spencer W. Kimball, “The Second Century of Brigham Young University,” BYU devotional address, 10 October 1975.
16. Kimball, “Second Century.”
17. Kimball, “Second Century.”
18. Kimball, “Second Century.”
19. Kimball, “Second Century”; quoting Kimball, “Education for Eternity.”
20. Kimball, “Second Century”; quoting Brigham Young, “Remarks,” *Deseret News Weekly*, 6 June 1860, 97; also quoting Young, letter to his son Alfales Young, 20 October 1875.
21. See David A. Bednar, “‘Walk in the Meekness of My Spirit’ (Doctrine and Covenants 19:23),” BYU university conference address, 28 August 2017.



An Obligation to the World

KEVIN J WORTHEN

♦ *BYU University Conference Address, August 23, 2021*

INTRODUCTION



Kevin J Worthen was serving as president of the university when he delivered this address and introduced the BYU Statement on Belonging and the creation of the Office of Belonging. He reminded the campus community of Elder David A. Bednar’s invitation to hearken to President Spencer W. Kimball’s admonition to use “gospel methodology, concepts, and insights . . . to do what the world cannot do in its own frame of reference” (Kimball, “The Second Century of Brigham Young University”; quoted in Bednar, “Look unto Me in Every Thought,” page 212). President Worthen explained how both the substance of the BYU Statement on Belonging and the process of arriving at it through counseling in councils draw on gospel methodology, concepts, and insights. He also reflected on President Kimball’s prophetic expectations for BYU to “*remain* a unique university in all the world” (“Installation of and Charge to the President,” page 164; emphasis added).

This talk has been excerpted; for the full text, visit speeches.byu.edu/envisioning-BYU.

*We have “an obligation”
to share our own unique
insights with the world,
because we have something
unique to offer the world.*

— KEVIN J WORTHEN



WHAT A WONDERFUL sight it is to see us gathered together again on this campus. Like any culture, academia has its own distinct idiosyncrasies that seem natural to its members but that might strike an outsider as a bit odd. For example, at this and at many universities, we annually celebrate the start of a new year in August, even though there are more than four months left on our calendars. And while January is still nearly half a year away, we look, in Janus-like fashion, to both the past and the future. To us, it just seems normal to pause in August to celebrate our successes, move on from our failures, and renew our commitment to the causes in which we are engaged.

A DAUNTING YET EXCITING CHALLENGE

Reflecting our Janus-like midyear pause, I want to frame my vision for the future year by turning to the past, focusing initially on the events of one particular day at BYU: October 10, 1975—a day that forever changed the trajectory of my life and career. The occasion was the Founders Day convocation celebrating the centennial anniversary of the founding of BYU. President Spencer W. Kimball was on campus to dedicate the Carillon Tower and Bells, which had been constructed to commemorate the centennial. It was a memorable day for all involved.

However, at the time I didn't know that any of this was happening. I was not in Provo on October 10, 1975. Nor was I a BYU student at the time. I had attended another college the year before and was, on that day, in Monclova, Coahuila, Mexico, serving in the first area of my mission. Yet even though I was completely unaware of—and frankly uninterested in—what was happening in Provo at the time, what happened here that day greatly shaped my future.

The connecting link came almost three and a half years later, in the spring of 1979. I had finished my mission, transferred to BYU, and was about to graduate. I knew I wanted to go to law school, but I was not sure which law school I should attend. BYU was on my list, but I was still undecided when I walked into the Harold B. Lee Library on that spring day.

As I was wandering in what was then the periodicals section of the library, I came across a copy of the speech that President Kimball gave at the centennial celebration on October 10, 1975.¹ It is now known as the second-century address because it outlines President Kimball's prophetic vision of what could happen at BYU in its second century.

President Kimball described his vision that BYU would become an “educational Everest,”² a place where things would be done in a way and at a level unlike anywhere else in the world, a place that would provide an “education for eternity,”³ and a place where faculty and students would help roll “back the frontiers of knowledge” while still being grounded in “the vital and revealed truths that have been sent to us from heaven.”⁴

President Kimball repeatedly emphasized that this higher view would require that we deviate from established norms or patterns in some respects. But he also made it clear that this did not give us an excuse for being mediocre or second-rate. Instead, this higher view required that we do more than others. President Kimball put it this way:

*Your light must have a special glow, for while you will do many things in the programs of this university that are done elsewhere, these same things can and must be done better here than others do them. You will also do some special things here that are left undone by other institutions.*⁵

His was not a call to flee the world but to engage it on our own terms, with the goal of improving the world.

As I read the talk, I experienced what I now call “revelation in the Lee Library.” I wanted to be part of what President Kimball described, and I knew for that reason that this was where I should go to law

school. I wanted to go to a place where a commitment to excellence is expected and where we could do some traditional things as well as and even better than others while also attending to even more important matters. I did not envision at the time that that decision would lead me back to BYU as a faculty member eight years later or to my current position as president, but it did.

Over the years, the impact from reading that speech and my appreciation for the motivating power of President Kimball's vision have only increased. I find myself going back to it—and the mission statement that largely grew out of it—over and over again, discovering that, like scripture, it contains new insights with each reading, despite my previous familiarity with it.

My most recent experience in that regard was prompted by an address given by Elder David A. Bednar at the President's Leadership Summit this past April here at BYU.⁶ As part of those remarks, Elder Bednar shared his memory of hearing President Kimball's address. Unlike me, Elder Bednar was actually present at the devotional that day as a recently married senior student at BYU. Elder Bednar described President Kimball's talk as "inspiring, edifying, and prophetic."⁷ He then noted that "we are approaching the halfway mark of the second century of BYU," stating that this would be a good "time to consider where we are and what may be coming next."⁸

Rather than elaborating on one particular theme, Elder Bednar read six different statements from President Kimball's second-century address, providing no commentary to those quotations but inviting those present "to consider how these [statements] apply to both individuals and the institution."⁹

While consideration of each of these statements is worthwhile, I was struck by one in particular—the last of the six that Elder Bednar shared. In that quotation, President Kimball stated:

Gospel methodology, concepts, and insights can help us to do what the world cannot do in its own frame of reference.

In some ways the Church Educational System, in order to be unique in the years that lie ahead, may have to break with certain patterns of the educational establishment. When the world has

*lost its way on matters of principle, we have **an obligation** to point the way.¹⁰*

Two things from this quotation struck me in particular. First, we have “an obligation” to share our own unique insights with the world, because we have something unique to offer the world. Second, we can best meet that obligation by introducing “gospel methodology, concepts, and insights” into the frame of reference. That is a daunting yet exciting challenge.

STRIVING TO CREATE A COMMUNITY OF BELONGING

Let me provide some thoughts about what this might look like, using as an example the challenges BYU and the rest of the United States are facing with respect to racism and other forms of bigotry in our society. As you know, in response to the joint call of President Russell M. Nelson and leaders of the NAACP for “educational leaders . . . to review processes . . . and organizational attitudes regarding racism and root them out once and for all,”¹¹ we appointed a committee, which after extensive work produced a report and recommendations of steps to be taken. I am extremely grateful to the members of the Committee on Race, Equity, and Belonging who have given so much of their time, their talents, and their hearts in that effort.

As the President’s Council carefully and thoroughly considered the committee’s report and recommendations, we determined that a necessary first step was to establish a framework within which and by which we would evaluate the various recommendations. The framework would not only provide guiding principles for evaluating the recommendations and for measuring our progress but would also set forth a vision of our end goal—what we hoped our campus community would become as a result of this effort.

The resulting statement describing this framework is in substance, source, and tone different from the typical kinds of diversity statements one might find on most campuses. It is infused, to use President Kimball’s terms, in “gospel methodology, concepts, and insights.”

The statement begins: “We are united by our common primary identity as children of God . . . and our commitment to the truths of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.”¹² Notice that the statement begins with what unites us, not what divides us. More important, note that it begins with a fundamental gospel truth—maybe the core gospel truth—about our identity. In a world of identity politics, we cannot lose sight of who we really are.¹³ And knowing who we really are—and who everyone else is—changes the frame of reference for addressing this important issue. Note also the scriptural references for that and for many of the other statements in the document. Reliance on the eternal, unchanging truths found in these scriptures will ensure both that the principles will remain relevant and that we do not unwittingly drift away from those truths as circumstances change. And note finally that we are united not only by our common eternal identity but also by our covenant commitment to the truths of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

With these key gospel truths as a foundation, “we strive to create a community of belonging composed of students, faculty, and staff whose hearts are knit together in love.”¹⁴ This is an effort to build a particular kind of community, a community of belonging involving everyone: students, faculty, and staff. It is a relationship-based community defined by how we view and interact with others—one so infused with love and concern for others that it feels as though our hearts are knit together. Note again the scriptural grounding of this principle.

As a result of having our hearts knit together, the community is one in which “all relationships”—not just the relationships with those with whom we agree but all relationships—“reflect devout love of God and a loving, genuine concern for the welfare of our neighbor.”¹⁵ It is a community in which we strive to live the two great commandments.

“We value and embrace”—not just tolerate but value and embrace—“the variety of individual characteristics, life experiences and circumstances, perspectives, talents, and gifts of each member of the community and the richness and strength they bring to our community.”¹⁶

The scripture reference here is of particular significance. In teaching this concept to the ancient Corinthians, Paul likened those in the community to different parts of the body. Each is distinct from the others, each has a role to play, and each role is significant. But all are part of “the body of Christ,”¹⁷ united by Him in such a way that when one suffers, all suffer, and when one is honored, all rejoice.¹⁸

In the community we are striving to establish, “our interactions create and support an environment of belonging,”¹⁹ one in which, as the scripture reference makes clear, there “are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints.”²⁰ Finally, there is a reminder that the core focus and central purpose for this effort and the reason for our existence as a university is, as our mission statement makes clear, “the full realization of each student’s divine potential.”²¹

In short, our end goal in this effort is to create “a community of belonging” and “an environment of belonging” in which each member is valued and all realize their divine potential as children of God.

This statement on belonging will provide the constitution, if you will, for our efforts in this regard. It is derived from and grounded in gospel concepts and insights, including fundamental scriptural truths. As I noted, it will provide guiding principles for evaluating and implementing the recommendations provided by the Committee on Race, Equity, and Belonging. But it will also be the guide for addressing the needs of all marginalized individuals on campus.

In that regard, I am pleased to announce the forthcoming creation of a new Office of Belonging on campus. The office will focus on helping campus members achieve the community of belonging outlined in the BYU Statement on Belonging, using the guiding principles it sets forth. The office will not only be core to our efforts to root out racism but will also help us combat “prejudice of *any* kind,” including that “based on race, ethnicity, nationality, tribe, gender, age, disability, socioeconomic status, religious belief . . . , and sexual orientation.”²²

The office will focus primarily on coordinating and enhancing belonging services and efforts on campus, including through providing subject matter expertise and ideas. It will be headed by a

vice-president-level official who will be a member of the President's Council. Details about the new office and further responses to the other recommendations will be announced in the future.

COUNSELING WITH COUNCILS

This unique approach to addressing one of the most pressing issues facing all universities is, for me, an example—and possible fulfillment—of President Kimball's prophetic declaration that “gospel methodology, concepts, and insights can help us to do what the world cannot do in its own frame of reference.”

An equally powerful though much less visible fulfillment of that declaration is found in the process by which this statement on belonging was created. This statement is the result of extensive discussion and counseling by the President's Council at BYU. That council in turn also counseled with other “councils,” including not only the Committee on Race, Equity, and Belonging but also leadership councils of the university and even of the Church. In short, it is a product of counseling with councils.

Early on in my BYU career, a member of an external evaluation team observed that BYU was big on councils. He was right. We don't have a faculty senate; we have a faculty advisory council. We don't have a student union; we have a student advisory council. We have an administrative advisory council, a dean's council, an athletic advisory council, and on and on and on. Over time it has dawned on me that this distinctive feature reflects not just a unique nomenclature but a vastly underrated and underutilized gospel principle about how key decisions can be made in ways that produce both sound conclusions and individual growth.

A recent series of articles and podcasts in the *Church News* highlighted that, as President M. Russell Ballard noted, counseling with councils “is ‘critical’ to the Church's organization at every level”²³ and is *the way God has done His work from the very beginning*. The use of councils is not just a good management practice; it is a heaven-utilized eternal process.²⁴ Successful councils increase the sources of input

needed to make sound decisions.²⁵ They also produce more buy-in, thereby increasing the enthusiasm and support for the decision and for subsequent implementation. At the same time, individual members of the council develop a greater understanding of their own potential and worth and a better comprehension of their stewardship.

President Dallin H. Oaks has observed that the key factor to realizing these and other benefits of councils is the inspired revelation that comes from the proper use of councils. He stated, “Revelation is the ultimate objective of the council—either revelation in the council, revelation to participants, or revelation to presiding officers.”²⁶ As Young Women general president Bonnie H. Cordon observed, “As we seek to know [God’s] will, as men and women come together, listening to each other and listening to the Spirit, revelation flows.”²⁷

Let me testify that I have felt that spirit of revelation as I have participated in councils concerning our efforts to increase belonging on this campus. I have felt that same spirit of revelation and comfort as we have counseled and continue to counsel about the ongoing pandemic. That is not to suggest that the BYU Statement on Belonging is destined to become canonized scripture or that every decision we have made or will make to address the ongoing twists and turns of the COVID-19 pandemic are divinely inspired. But I have seen and felt enough of those feelings in both of those settings that I cannot deny that God is interested and involved in the work of this university and that His influence can be enhanced by the proper use of councils.

With that in mind, let me suggest that we could all benefit—individually and institutionally—by viewing and operating our “committee” work as councils, whose primary purpose is, as President Oaks observed, to produce revelation—revelation to the council, to the individual participants, and to the presiding authority. If we were to view every committee assignment—from more foundational hiring committees to ad hoc party planning committees—as a revelation-inviting counseling opportunity, it would change the tenor of the decisions and might change mundane meetings into sublime, uplifting spiritual-growth opportunities.²⁸

CONTENTION IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH BELONGING

Now, underlying both the substance of the BYU Statement on Belonging and the power of the counseling process that produced it is one other key gospel concept that often is overlooked by the world, especially today—the revealed, eternal principle taught directly by the Savior Himself that contention is of the devil and must be avoided.²⁹

Contention will undermine *any* effort to create a belonging community in which our hearts are knit together. It is significant that the Book of Mormon passage in which Alma exhorted his people to “hav[e] their hearts knit together” begins by noting that Alma “commanded them that there should be no contention one with another.”³⁰ Contention is simply incompatible with belonging.

Similarly, contention will destroy any effort to invite or produce revelation in any council setting. Contention is simply incompatible with the presence of the Spirit. As Jesus taught, “He that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention.”³¹

It does not matter what or how important the subject is—whether it is race relations, mask or vaccine protocols, or which football team is the best—contention is still soul destroying, for it is Satan who “stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another.”³² The topic may involve something as essential as the proper mode of baptism—which was the subject that prompted the contention that Jesus rebuked in 3 Nephi 11—but contention is still not justified, and Jesus still commands “that such things should be done away.”³³

Now, I am *not* saying that we can’t address, vigorously discuss, or fundamentally disagree with each other on important topics. Eliminating such discussions would undermine both the purpose of having a university and the power of councils. But I *am* saying that even in those settings, we cannot afford to contend in anger one with another.³⁴

I realize that we cannot control how contentious other people are. But we must avoid it ourselves. As Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf taught us so powerfully last week, “Conflict is inevitable and contention is a choice.”³⁵ When we find ourselves becoming contentious, we

should stop—and, if necessary, disengage. No matter what the topic or how strongly we believe it to be essential, contention will destroy any community in which it flourishes and injure the eternal spirit and progress of any individual who engages in it. I am now ashamed to admit that it took more than one Bible-bashing experience as a young missionary for me to realize that no matter how much I was right and no matter how important the topic, the Spirit of the Lord flees when we become contentious. I have discovered that for me, an indicator that I am becoming contentious is when I find myself more interested in *who* is right than *what* is right. When my primary goal is to vindicate my own position or prove another wrong rather than to find the truth from whatever source it may come, I know the spirit of contention is soon to follow. If we truly want to be a Zion-like belonging community in which councils facilitate revelation, we must avoid contention.

That can be a daunting challenge in the highly polarized environment in which we find ourselves, but, as with all gospel commandments, the challenge comes accompanied by an unfailing promise of divine help necessary for the moment if our hearts are open.³⁶

PROPHETIC EXPECTATIONS

Now, even though I was not present when President Kimball gave that stirring address nearly fifty years ago, technology as well as the Spirit allow me to have a sense of what it was like to be there hearing his voice and, moreover, to consider some ways in which his vision has been and is being fulfilled around us every day. So, as I conclude, join me in a bit of reflection on the words of President Kimball and the way in which his vision is being realized all around us. As you do so, pay particular attention to his final words about his expectations:

Your light must have a special glow, for while you will do many things in the programs of this university that are done elsewhere, these same things can and must be done better here than others do them. You will also do some special things here that are left undone by other institutions.

First among these unique features is the fact that education on this campus deliberately and persistently concerns itself with “education for eternity,” not just for time. . . .

Your double heritage and dual concerns with the secular and the spiritual require you to be “bilingual.” . . .

. . . Quality teaching is a tradition never to be abandoned. . . .

. . . BYU . . . must concern itself . . . with the preparation of its students to take their place in society as thinking, thoughtful, and sensitive individuals who, in paraphrasing the motto of your centennial, come here dedicated to love of God, pursuit of truth, and service to mankind. . . .

. . . Gospel methodology, concepts, and insights can help us to do what the world cannot do in its own frame of reference. . . .

. . . We understand, as few people do, that education is a part of being about our Father’s business. . . .

As previous First Presidencies have said, and we say again to you, we expect (we do not simply hope) that Brigham Young University will “become a leader among the great universities of the world.” To that expectation I would add, “Become a unique university in all of the world!”³⁷

Those stirring concluding words about prophetic expectations have become emblazoned on my soul these past few years. President Kimball used almost those same words five years later at the inauguration of Elder Jeffrey R. Holland as president of this university. However, in that setting, President Kimball changed one word and added one significant sentence. He said:

*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.” 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.**³⁸*

I do not know what happened in the five-year interval between his second-century address and President Holland's inauguration that led President Kimball to change the focus of his charge from "becoming" to "remaining" a unique university. But I am certain that he saw that remaining a unique university would be the key to realizing our ultimate destiny as "the fully recognized university of the Lord about which so much has been spoken."

That is our prophetically declared future. I love you and I bear my witness that that future is possible—indeed, inevitable. May we all be blessed to be a part of that soul-stretching, soul-stirring endeavor in my prayer, 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. Kimball, "Second Century."

3. Spencer W. Kimball, "Education for Eternity," address to BYU faculty and staff, 12 September 1967; quoted in Kimball, "Second Century."

4. Kimball, "Second Century."

5. Kimball, "Second Century."

6. See David A. Bednar, "Look unto Me in Every Thought; Doubt Not, Fear Not," BYU leadership meeting address, 16 April 2021.

7. Bednar, "Look unto Me."

8. Bednar, "Look unto Me."

9. Bednar, "Look unto Me."

10. Kimball, "Second Century"; emphasis added; quoted in Bednar, "Look unto Me."

11. Russell M. Nelson, Derrick Johnson, Leon Russell, and Amos C. Brown, "Locking Arms for Racial Harmony in America: What the NAACP and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Are Doing Together," Church of Jesus Christ, Medium.com, 8 June 2020, medium.com/@Ch_JesusChrist/locking-arms-for-racial-harmony-in-america-2f62180abf37.

12. BYU Statement on Belonging (23 August 2021); in "BYU Announces the Formation of a New Office of Belonging," Announcements, BYU News, 23 August 2021, news.byu.edu/announcements/byu-forms-new-office-of-belonging; see Acts 17:29 and Psalm 82:6; see also the Mission of Brigham Young University (4 November 1981).

13. At the recent funeral of a dear friend of this university, I learned that when asked the common introductory question "Where are you from?" this

friend's answer was often "Heaven." Even though he had entered this mortal existence in Logan, Utah, and had come to wonderful earthly parents, he wanted people to know of his true identity and origin.

14. BYU Statement on Belonging; see Mosiah 18:21.

15. BYU Statement on Belonging; see Mission of BYU.

16. BYU Statement on Belonging; see 1 Corinthians 12:12–27.

17. 1 Corinthians 12:27.

18. See 1 Corinthians 12:26.

19. BYU Statement on Belonging; see Ephesians 2:19.

20. Ephesians 2:19.

21. BYU Statement on Belonging; see Mission of BYU.

22. "Prejudice," *General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, March 2021 (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ, 2021), 38.6.14 (p. 401), churchofjesuschrist.org; emphasis added.

23. M. Russell Ballard, quoted in Sydney Walker and Sarah Jane Weaver, "Inside Church Headquarters Photo Gallery: 17 Things We've Learned About Councils," Leaders and Ministry, *Church News*, 5 August 2021, thechurchnews.com/leaders-and-ministry/2021-08-05/inside-church-headquarters-photo-gallery-summary-points-220912.

24. See, for example, Abraham 4:26; 5:2–3.

25. See Sydney Walker, "Inside Church Headquarters: What President Oaks and President Eyring Have Learned About Revelation in Councils," Leaders and Ministry, *Church News*, 8 July 2021, thechurchnews.com/leaders-and-ministry/2021-07-08/church-councils-president-oaks-eyring-first-presidency-218412.

26. Dallin H. Oaks, quoted in Walker and Weaver, "17 Things We've Learned."

27. Bonnie H. Cordon, quoted in Walker and Weaver, "17 Things We've Learned."

28. Application of the eight principles of councils outlined in the *Church News* would facilitate that transition (in Walker and Weaver, "17 Things We've Learned"):

- "Understand stewardship."
- "Know your purpose."
- "Invite the Spirit by preparing."
- "Seek the Lord's will, not your own."
- "Make sure every voice is heard."
- "Seek women's perspectives."
- "Listen to learn."
- "Seek consensus through revelation, not compromise."

29. See 3 Nephi 11:29–30.

30. Mosiah 18:21.

31. 3 Nephi 11:29.

32. 3 Nephi 11:29.

33. 3 Nephi 11:30.

34. Even in an educational setting, the Lord said that contention “was very grievous unto [Him]” (Doctrine and Covenants 95:10).

35. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Five Messages That All of God’s Children Need to Hear,” BYU Education Week address, 17 August 2021.

36. See 1 Nephi 3:7.

37. Kimball, “Second Century”; quoting Kimball, “Education for Eternity”; also quoting Harold B. Lee, “Be Loyal to the Royal Within You,” BYU devotional address, 11 September 1973.

38. Spencer W. Kimball, “Installation of and Charge to the President,” address at the inauguration of Jeffrey R. Holland as BYU president, 14 November 1980; emphasis added.



On the Uniqueness of BYU

C. SHANE REESE

♦ *BYU University Conference Address, August 23, 2021*

INTRODUCTION



C. Shane Reese was BYU academic vice president when he delivered this address to faculty members, building on an admonition given to the university only months earlier by Elder David A. Bednar (see “Look unto Me in Every Thought,” pages 203–15). Elder Bednar had challenged university leadership to take to heart President Spencer W. Kimball’s admonitions for BYU to remain unique as it pursued academic distinction in its second century (see “Installation and Charge to the President,” pages 159–64). Focusing on what makes BYU unique, Vice President Reese stressed the importance of using gospel methodologies to address university problems, of honoring research mentoring at the university, and of applying “mission-fit” criteria when making hiring decisions.

This talk has been excerpted; for the full text, visit speeches.byu.edu/envisioning-BYU.

Our ability to define and assess and also hire and retain faculty who are well aligned with the mission of the university is vital to the sustainability of our unique and inspired mission and the foundational imperatives shared by our board of trustees.

— C. SHANE REESE



WELCOME TO THE faculty session of university conference! We are thrilled to be together at the start of another fall semester when students are buzzing around.

I want to extend my warmest greetings and an open-armed welcome to the 109 new members of the faculty! Some join us from other institutions; others are freshly minted PhDs. Every college in the university will welcome new members of the faculty. I am thrilled for the opportunities that await you as you begin your journey at BYU. I invite you to participate fully in the university: attend a cultural event, watch a soccer game, walk around campus, and experience all the “feels” of this amazing place. While the pandemic may necessitate some limitations on these experiences, I remain optimistic and hopeful that those of you who join us this year will be granted a view of what awaits you: a tremendous student body, talented and welcoming faculty, a stunning campus environment, and sweet feelings as you find belonging on this campus. May you find the awe of participating in the mission of BYU as I have in my twenty years here. In 2017, President Kevin J Worthen invited graduates in a commencement address to “be awful in its original, unpejorated sense—that you always be aware of things that are awe-inspiring.”¹ Just as he did, I urge “you to be full of awe”² as you begin this school year.

A UNIQUE UNIVERSITY

BYU’s Carillon Tower was constructed to commemorate and celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of “the BYU,” and as President Spencer W. Kimball noted in his dedicatory address on October 10, 1975, the carillon bells would play “the great melodies that have motivated the people of the Lord’s church in the past and will lift our hearts and inspire us in the second century—with joy and even

greater determination.”³ I have been lifted with joy and greater determination by those bells ringing, “All is well! All is well!”⁴

President Kimball compared his prophetic vision of the potential of BYU as an institution of higher education to a mountain, describing BYU as an “educational Everest”⁵—that is, the mountain peak that towers above all other mountains. In describing how BYU might establish itself as an educational Everest, he said:

*There are many ways in which BYU can tower above other universities—not simply because of the size of its student body or its beautiful campus but because of the unique light BYU can send forth into the educational world. Your light must have a special glow, for while you will do many things in the programs of this university that are done elsewhere, these same things can and must be done better here than others do them. You will also do some special things here that are left undone by other institutions.*⁶

In a poignantly prophetic declaration, President Kimball indicated that not only are we to shine a light into the sphere of higher education but that we should shine a “unique light” into the sphere of higher education. As a reinforcement of the need to be unique in our efforts, Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said at a recent BYU leadership meeting:

*We should not simply follow the established or emerging patterns of other universities to address the challenges we do now and will yet face. We can, we should, and we must look unto the Savior in every thought to find every solution and to make every decision. At BYU we can truly focus on the spiritual and practical substance of solutions and not just on superficial symbolism. We should be unique in striking at the root of important and timely issues and not be merely one of the thousands hacking at the branches. By looking unto the Lord, we can fulfill our remarkable role and responsibility “in a manner which never had been known.”*⁷

A critical component, then, of the realization of the prophetic vision for the destiny of BYU as a distinctive institution of higher

education is the uniqueness of our approach. President Worthen has spoken previously about the unique kind of education that we provide for our students at BYU.⁸ Today I want to focus on a few of the aspects of that unique education that distinctly affect us as faculty at BYU.

I find it instructive that the etymology of the word *unique* indicates that modern usage may reflect some loss of the original meaning. As use of the word *unique* has picked up in the nineteenth century, it has devolved to represent concepts such as *remarkable*, *unusual*, or *uncommon*.⁹ The Latin root of *unique* is *unicus*, which means “one and only.” Today I would like to focus my remarks on two aspects of the definition of *unique* that are implied by its Latin root: *one* and *only*. How can we be both *one* and *only* as a university? How can we retain our uniqueness when we might be tempted to be more and more like others?

It is notable that President Kimball suggested that even the “things in the programs of this university”—the same academic endeavors that are done elsewhere—will be done better here at BYU. Above and beyond those endeavors that are done elsewhere, President Kimball mentioned the things “left undone” by others. Implicit in this reference, he seems to have been suggesting that these are not merely efforts that others will not undertake but that they are efforts left undone by others. May I suggest that each of you may be engaged in efforts that are left undone by your colleagues at other prominent institutions around the country and around the world.

Today I want to share a few of the ways in which I view BYU as unique—the ways in which our faculty at BYU are either doing things better than others or doing things that are being left undone by others.

OUR USE OF GOSPEL METHODOLOGIES TO SOLVE PROBLEMS

First, in the language of both President Kimball and Elder Bednar, one of the defining and unique aspects of BYU is that we take peculiar approaches to solving problems. Because we are blessed to be sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and our

board of trustees comprises those we sustain not only as Church leaders but also as prophets, seers, and revelators, we can appeal to lessons that we have all learned from our shared tradition in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In solutions grounded in the gospel of Jesus Christ, we find both defining aspects of our uniqueness: unity, or oneness, and singularity, or being set apart from others. One way to describe the kinds of solutions based on the teachings of the Great Mediator, Jesus Christ, rather than on the standard practices of other institutions of higher education is that they are “gospel methodologies.”¹⁰ These gospel methodologies are approaches to problems that may not even enter the lexicons of traditional institutions of higher education. While you will certainly come up with appropriate gospel methodologies to solve the problems facing the students, faculty, and staff in your own departments and colleges, some gospel methodologies that can serve our entire university community have been taught to us from a young age and include such revolutionary ideas as forgiveness, repentance, unity, and love. While such methodologies may even be scorned by others, the fact that building faith in the Savior of all mankind is at the core of our mission statement allows us to leverage that common faith to unify us in using principles such as forgiveness, unity, repentance, and love to address the issues that we will face in the upcoming school year.

The beauty of gospel methodologies as remedies for the ills we will face together is the sense of unity that they create. Take forgiveness, for example. While those who do not have gospel methodologies may view forgiveness as a sign of weakness, we know that the principle of forgiveness is eternal and provides a path for both understanding and reconciliation. What a powerful tool for our campus community in these times that seem to offer opportunities for division at every turn.

Timothy Keller, a prominent Presbyterian pastor in Manhattan, spoke of the sense of community that results when the gospel methodology of forgiveness is applied:

Christians in community are to never give up on one another, never give up on a relationship, never “write off” another believer and have nothing to do with them. We must never tire of forgiving (and/or repenting!) and seeking to repair our relationships. Matthew 5:23–26 tells us we should go to someone if we know they have something against us. Matthew 18:15–20 says we should approach someone if we know that we have something against them. In short, if any relationship has cooled off or has weakened in any way—it is always your move. It doesn’t matter who started it. God always holds you responsible to reach out to repair a tattered relationship. A Christian is responsible to begin the process of reconciliation, regardless of how the distance or the alienation began.¹¹

Despite a worldly clamor that forgiveness is a sign of weakness, we collectively understand that forgiveness is a path to understanding and a path to healing. In a season of the world when the clamor is loud and we may feel wronged, our ability to forgive and be forgiven will lead to healing and unity as a campus community.

We have need of gospel methodologies to address the pressing issues of our day. Forgiveness is but one of many gospel methodologies that will build unity and distinguish us from our peers during this the second century. As President Kimball put it, “Gospel methodology, concepts, and insights can help us to do what the world cannot do in its own frame of reference.”¹² In other words, our gospel methodologies, such as forgiveness, will provide a path unseen by other institutions of higher education.

INSPIRING LEARNING

President Worthen reminded us of our unique approach to balancing teaching and research in his seminal address entitled “Inspiring Learning.” In trying to capture the essence of the four aims of a BYU education,¹³ he gave the following definition:

When I use the term “inspiring learning,” I have in mind both meanings of the word inspiring. I hope we inspire our students to learn. And I hope that learning leads to inspiration. When both

*things happen, inspiring learning occurs, and we can then know we are on the right track to achieve the core goals set forth in our mission statement.*¹⁴

Notice that this includes not only the lessons learned in classrooms but, more broadly, a wide range of learning that leads to inspiration. Examples include the lessons learned when a student and a faculty member engage in a research project together, when a faculty member shares an insight with a student that improves their character, and when a student interacts with a faculty member on a study abroad program. One of the thrilling aspects of reviewing the reports that students share about their inspiring learning experiences is reading the words they use to describe their inspiring learning—words such as *amazing*, *life changing*, and *transformative* and comments such as “This provided opportunities that wouldn’t have been available if I didn’t work with Professor X.” Wow! I am quite certain that we may never know the extent of the influence of our efforts to mentor students, but reading their own descriptions is itself an inspiring exercise.

It goes without saying that President Worthen’s definition of inspiring learning implies that students are at the center of all endeavors at BYU. I get a front-row seat to see and feel the inspiring nature of inspiring learning when I interact with students. The diverse ways in which faculty engage with students are impressive. From classroom instruction to study abroad experiences to student employment to student service and activities, the inspiring learning on this campus is broad in its manifestation and profound in its influence.

The gold standard for inspiring learning is when a faculty member and a student or a group of students are jointly engaged in a research endeavor. Walking through the portal of discovery together allows for the type of discovery and inquiry that may also happen at other institutions, but research mentoring at BYU also allows students to see how a faculty member increases understanding of her or his academic discipline and simultaneously strives to increase her or his faith in the Savior. This process of discovery and our razor-like focus on students as we pursue research endeavors are critical components of our unique mission at BYU.

While serving as the president of BYU, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland said:

I am making an unabashed appeal for a distinctly Latter-day Saint approach to education—an approach best featured on this campus by our present university-wide efforts in religion, honors, and general education.

*Now I do not want my next statement misunderstood. Please, do **not** misunderstand. I do not believe that Brigham Young University, at least with current policies on both funding and mission, **will** or **should** ever aspire to be a great research university as the world defines research universities. I do believe, however, with all my heart that we should aspire to become the finest undergraduate university on the face of the planet. Now the misunderstanding I don't want is a knee-jerk, unwarranted assumption that we will therefore have no serious scholarship required of us nor have a significant, albeit careful selection of graduate and professional programs. I did **not** say we would be a four-year college. I said we would be a **university**.*

But we will never, I think, be an MIT or a Cal Tech—nor should we. However, to be a world-class undergraduate teaching university, we have to be a lot smarter and a lot better than we are now. For the purposes of an absolutely unequalled liberal arts general and religious education, we have to have teachers who investigate and integrate and know something, who are ambitious about godly growth—what Joseph Smith would call “enlargement.” We have to have teachers who are growing in precisely the same manner we expect students to grow—and that means significant scholarship.¹⁵

A unifying and singular aspect of our BYU uniqueness is not exclusively the quality or quantity of our scholarship; our uniqueness derives from the motivation for pursuing that high-quality scholarship. Unlike peer institutions that pursue scholarship for accolades from academic peers or increased personal reputation, we pursue scholarship because the investigation and integration develop the quality of the whole person of each of our students.

MISSION-FIT HIRING

BYU is only as unique as the faculty who are entrusted with the education, mentoring, and leadership of our students. In speaking about the important role of our faculty, President Worthen has reiterated the following substantive and bold statement in various settings around campus: “The most important decisions that will be made in my tenure as president at BYU are the people we hire.” I am personally prone to overstatement, so making overarching, and perhaps overreaching, statements such as this is not beyond me. President Worthen, however, is a man who measures his words carefully. His wise leadership follows the well-known mantra of carpenters: measure two or three times; cut once. It is notable that given the weight of the many decisions he has been making in the course of his inspired leadership of this university, he considers the decisions on hiring faculty not *among* the most important decisions made at the university but rather *the* most important decisions. While hiring faculty who align closely with the mission of the university is a responsibility that President Worthen feels acutely, it is a responsibility that he shares with not only me, as academic vice president, but also with the faculty.

The primary purpose of faculty work at BYU

*is to assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life. That assistance should provide a period of intensive learning in a stimulating setting where a commitment to excellence is expected and the full realization of human potential is pursued.*¹⁶

In short, our purpose is the exceptional spiritual, intellectual, and emotional development of our students. Indeed, we strive to fulfill President Kimball’s prophetic admonition “that every professor and teacher in this institution would keep his [or her] subject matter bathed in the light and color of the restored gospel.”¹⁷

Our ability to define and assess and also hire and retain faculty who are well aligned with the mission of the university is vital to the sustainability of our unique and inspired mission and the foundational imperatives shared by our board of trustees. In our hiring

stance, we maintain a strong preference to hire faithful members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The distinction between alignment with our mission, or mission fit, and ecclesiastical clearance is worth noting. While mission-fit assessment is our shared responsibility, ecclesiastical clearance is determined by the Church Ecclesiastical Clearance Office. Hiring faculty who have academic credentials, who are committed teachers in their fields of choice, who are invested citizens, and who have essential elements of alignment with the Mission of Brigham Young University is essential to sustaining the mission of BYU. The essential characteristics of faculty who meet the basic academic standards for faculty employment as well as mission alignment standards include

- intentionality in building faith in Jesus Christ and testimony of His restored gospel among members of the BYU community;
- commitment to seek and be led by the Holy Ghost in all aspects of our university assignments;
- student-centeredness above all other professional pursuits;
- excellence in teaching, scholarship, mentoring, and citizenship;
- commitment to a campus culture of unity, love, and belonging;
- a pattern of exemplary conduct that combines spiritual values and personal integrity in conducting work in a professional manner consistent with the values espoused by the university and the Church; and
- a pattern of public expression that faithfully promotes the mission and doctrines of the Church; is devoid of contradicting or opposing Church doctrines, policies, and general leaders; and refrains from expressions and behaviors that are dishonest, unchaste, profane, or disrespectful of others.

Each of these characteristics reinforces the uniqueness of BYU in the ecosphere of institutions of higher education. I invite faculty colleagues to engage in dialogue about how we prepare, recruit, attract, hire, and retain faculty who align closely with the mission of BYU. In these discussions, I anticipate that we will be blessed with revelation about how to proceed in ways that we may not now see clearly.

It is both the act of seeking those with such strong qualifications and drawing on the inspiration needed to find those prepared with these qualifications that make our faculty unique, or “one and only.”

WE ARE ALL CHILDREN OF HEAVENLY PARENTS

As a compelling example of how we might utilize gospel methodologies in an effort to unify our campus community is the BYU Statement on Belonging, shared with our campus community this morning by President Worthen. I invite you to find meaningful ways to reinforce the principles found in this statement.

The BYU Statement on Belonging reads:

We are united by our common primary identity as children of God (Acts 17:29; Psalm 82:6) and our commitment to the truths of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ (BYU Mission Statement). We strive to create a community of belonging composed of students, faculty, and staff whose hearts are knit together in love (Mosiah 18:21) where:

- *All relationships reflect devout love of God and a loving, genuine concern for the welfare of our neighbor (BYU Mission Statement);*
- *We value and embrace the variety of individual characteristics, life experiences and circumstances, perspectives, talents, and gifts of each member of the community and the richness and strength they bring to our community (1 Corinthians 12:12–27);*
- *Our interactions create and support an environment of belonging (Ephesians 2:19); and*
- *The full realization of each student’s divine potential is our central focus (BYU Mission Statement).¹⁸*

I invite you to take opportunities in department and college councils to counsel together about ways in which you might help all members of the BYU campus community feel a greater sense of belonging. I invite you to use those opportunities to discuss, in particular, those individuals who feel estranged from the campus community. The BYU Statement on Belonging can become a framework

for and a guide to assist in those discussions. As we anchor our counsel in the understanding that we are each children of loving heavenly parents, those discussions will be enlightened by inspiration about how our hearts can be “knit together in unity and in love one towards one another.”¹⁹

CONCLUSION

Thank you for being here today. I hope we can understand and embrace our uniqueness as faculty at BYU.

Today I will conclude with the same encouragement that President Kimball urged of the university faculty, staff, and students in his second-century address, which was “to lengthen your stride, quicken your step, and . . . continue your journey.”²⁰ I am confident that as we do so, we will be granted heaven’s help. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Kevin J Worthen, “Words to Live By,” BYU commencement address, 27 April 2017.
2. Worthen, “Words to Live By.”
3. Spencer W. Kimball, “The Second Century of Brigham Young University,” BYU devotional address, 10 October 1975.
4. “Come, Come, Ye Saints,” *Hymns* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2002), no. 30.
5. Kimball, “Second Century”; see also Spencer W. Kimball, “Installation of and Charge to the President,” address at the inauguration of Jeffrey R. Holland as BYU president, 14 November 1980.
6. Kimball, “Second Century.”
7. David A. Bednar, “Look unto Me in Every Thought; Doubt Not, Fear Not,” BYU leadership meeting address, 16 April 2021; quoting Alma 49:8.
8. See Kevin J Worthen, “BYU: A Unique Kind of Education,” BYU university conference address, 28 August 2017.
9. See Patricia T. O’Conner and Stewart Kellerman, *Origins of the Specious: Myths and Misconceptions of the English Language* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2010), 200.
10. See Kimball, “Second Century.”
11. Timothy Keller, “The Fading of Forgiveness,” *Comment*, Cardus, 6 May 2021, [cardus.ca/comment/article/the-fading-of-forgiveness](https://www.cardus.ca/comment/article/the-fading-of-forgiveness); emphasis in

original. Timothy Keller is the founding pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan.

12. Kimball, “Second Century.”

13. See the Aims of a BYU Education (1 March 1995).

14. Kevin J Worthen, “Inspiring Learning,” BYU university conference address, 22 August 2016.

15. Jeffrey R. Holland, “A School in Zion,” BYU annual university conference address, 22 August 1988; emphasis in original; quoting Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938), 354.

16. The Mission of Brigham Young University (4 November 1981).

17. Spencer W. Kimball, “Education for Eternity,” address to BYU faculty and staff, 12 September 1967.

18. BYU Statement on Belonging (23 August 2021); in “BYU Announces the Formation of a New Office of Belonging,” Announcements, BYU News, 23 August 2021, news.byu.edu/announcements/byu-forms-new-office-of-belonging.

19. Mosiah 18:21.

20. Kimball, “Second Century.”



Dare to Be Different: Preserving the Distinctive Light of Religious Universities

CLARK G. GILBERT

♦ *Article in Deseret Magazine, September 2022, 40–45*

INTRODUCTION



Clark G. Gilbert, serving as commissioner of the Church Educational System, published this essay on the fate of the religious university a few months after he gave a BYU devotional address that touched on the same topic (see “Christ’s Peace in Perilous Times,” 8 February 2022). In both pieces, he reminded BYU to hold fast to its unique mission, as so many initially religious universities

have failed to do.

Elder Gilbert calls for “courageous leadership” at religiously aligned colleges and universities to maintain their religious identity (page 258). His is a clarion call not only to BYU but to all “religious universities and faith-oriented faculty to deepen their confidence in the power of religious strength identity,” which “is not only important to a religious community, but it strengthens the academy and society more generally” (page 259–60). Therefore, he concludes, “Do not hide your light under a bushel. . . . Dare to be different in ways that are true to your distinctive light” (page 260).

*Do not hide your light under
a bushel; carry it with strength
and conviction. Dare to be
different in ways that are true
to your distinctive light.*

— CLARK G. GILBERT



AS A YOUNG PROFESSOR at Harvard University, I had occasion to visit Memorial Church for personal prayer and meditation. It seemed like a solemn sanctuary in an otherwise secular learning environment. As I walked out on the steps of the chapel, I stared across the courtyard to the wide, imposing columns creating the bulwark entrance to Widener Library. It was as if I was staring from the temple of faith to the hall of reason. These two ideals seemed to be facing off in a conflict that, at least in this formidable secular environment, would almost certainly end for many with the victory of reason.

This all-or-nothing Hobson's choice between faith and reason was antithetical to everything I had learned (and experienced) in my undergraduate studies at Brigham Young University. The most profound insights happened when secular and spiritual truths were brought together in inspired and reinforcing ways. As John Donne penned, "Reason is our soul's left hand, faith her right, / By these we reach divinity."¹

Today, I find myself serving as the commissioner of education for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, a system that includes BYU as well as BYU-Idaho, BYU-Hawaii, Ensign College, and a global online offering called BYU-Pathway Worldwide. Too often I have felt external forces trying to reassert on these institutions that same Hobson's choice I experienced standing on the steps of Memorial Church. I now recognize that these and other religious schools across the country enjoy a huge strategic advantage, but only if they dare to continue with and strengthen their religious identity—only if they dare to be different from their peers.

Harvard University's founding was decidedly religious. Its organizing laws and statutes from 1646 declare that "the main end of [a student's] life and studies [is] to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life (John 17:3)."² Harvard's universally recognized motto,

“*Veritas*,” was originally “*Veritas Christo et Ecclesiae*,” translated from Latin as “Truth for Christ and the Church.”

It would take two centuries for the motto (and the university) to drop “for Christ and the Church.” The initial drift was not one of hostility but rather redirected focus. By the late 1800s, President Charles W. Eliot had firmly entrenched the philosophy that the way to serve Christ and the church was not through the founding ideal of knowing God but rather through cultivating open inquiry. Eliot proclaimed, “It is thus that the university in our day serves Christ and the church.”³ But once spiritual learning was decoupled from secular inquiry, the path to secularization had been set.

The purpose of this article is not to criticize Harvard’s path to secularization. In fact, the road that Harvard modeled has made it the envy of the world. Thousands of universities seek to replicate Harvard’s scholarly excellence. Indeed, Duke and Vanderbilt University had early aspirations as the “Harvard of the South.” Stanford University has also been referred to as the “Harvard of the West.” Since BYU is the flagship institution within the system of higher education for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, some are pushing it toward the same aspiration. And it is not irrational for BYU to consider that path. BYU recruits superb students and faculty, evidenced by its number of National Merit Scholars and Fulbright Scholars. The incoming freshman GPA averages nearly 3.9, and its admissions yield rate is among the highest in the nation. BYU is also a top-five producer of students who go on to earn doctoral degrees. National media regularly identify BYU as a leader in quality and value. *Forbes* named BYU no. 1 in value based on its cost and quality ratio.⁴

But even if BYU were to purely seek secular standing, would the world ever accept BYU solely on its academic merits? Moreover, if its sponsoring religious institution further expanded its already significant investment in the university, would BYU receive equal standing in the academy? BYU’s undergraduate mission is well supported by its sponsoring religious organization with over \$500 million in annual operating funds coming from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. But even with such a stable financial footing and the strongest student academic profile in the Intermountain West,

attempting to replicate Harvard or any secular model is not a strategy for long-term success.

Religious schools must differentiate on their unique spiritual purposes, even as they strive to tie into the broader academic community. I had a conversation recently with Dan Sarewitz, former editor of *Issues in Science and Technology*, the journal published by the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Sarewitz said, “The academy needs BYU. But we need BYU to be BYU and not a watered-down version of every other secular university.” In other words, simply trying to replicate other models hides the very sources of differentiation religious universities can (and do) bring to the academy.

What are the distinct strengths of religious universities? I will group these into three broad categories: (1) research and scholarly inquiry, (2) character development, and (3) innovative institutional design.

For Sarewitz, research and inquiry at religious universities have direct implications for research policy. Without religious engagement, a whole category of distinctive research questions might be excluded or minimized from the academy. For example, Sarewitz has encouraged BYU to invest in areas of genetic markers for disease and inheritable traits that draw on our faith’s extensive genealogical data. Similarly, he points to proprietary data sets that draw on the Church’s extensive efforts in humanitarian aid and poverty alleviation.⁵ Derrick Anderson, at the American Council on Education, looks beyond specific topics to a more general approach to science that he calls “humble inquiry.”⁶ Anderson believes religious scholars often have a built-in respect for the moral and ethical implications of scientific exploration. He argues that belief in deity can provide a modesty and a thoughtfulness needed in science.⁷

Second, many of my colleagues have articulated the unique ways religious schools teach moral character. Philip Ryken, president of Wheaton College, argues that religious education cultivates informed and engaged citizens.⁸ *New York Times* columnist David Brooks and *Comment Magazine* editor Anne Snyder point out how a Christian education develops the whole person, inspiring not only intellectual but also social and community engagement.⁹ Rabbi Ari Berman,

president of Yeshiva University, highlights how preserving religious identity preserves religious community.¹⁰ This can also be connected to broader measures of societal flourishing. Where religion wanes we also see declines in social engagement, philanthropy, and family stability. Thus, religious schools play a critical role in preserving civil society.

Third, religious schools often facilitate innovative institutional design. Distinctive religious purpose can provide the identity and confidence needed to transform traditional universities. Henry J. Eyring, president of BYU–Idaho, articulates how religious identity can help address the cost and completion crisis facing American higher education.¹¹ John “Keoni” S. K. Kauwe III, president of BYU–Hawaii, has shown how religious identity can focus institutional design toward greater access for first-generation students.¹²

Despite these important social and academic contributions, mounting secular pressures threaten to limit religious universities’ differentiating role in American higher education. Eric Baxter and Montse Alvarado at the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty articulate some of the legal pressures facing religious universities—from housing to honor code commitments to hiring practices.¹³ Standing by religious identity can risk loss of funding, exclusion from federal contracts, or loss of student aid.

Even with a strong legal defense and clear constitutional protections, perceived pressure for compliance in accreditation can be significant. Fortunately, most regional accreditors appropriately recognize distinctive mission and simply require that the religious expectations be transparent and broadly communicated. Presidents of religiously affiliated universities who also serve on regional accrediting boards, including Robin Baker of George Fox University and Kevin J Worthen of BYU, repeatedly remind religious schools that their religious missions are not only protected but even encouraged by accreditation.

Beyond legal and accreditation pressures, there remain deeper cultural and social pressures on religious schools. I used Harvard’s path to secularization as an example, but their story is not unique. Yale and Dartmouth also had Congregationalist origins. Princeton

was Presbyterian, Brown was Baptist, and Columbia was Anglican. In his book *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from Their Christian Churches*, James T. Burtchaell provides an in-depth analysis of the path to religious disengagement. His study draws on the experience of universities with religious founding. His findings should give pause to any college seeking to preserve its religious identity. In most cases, the challenges to faith did not come from overt attacks on religious practice but rather from redirected priorities.¹⁴

Burtchaell's conclusions can be summarized in three recurring mechanisms that lead to religious disenfranchisement:

- Decoupled leadership
- Decoupled funding
- Decoupled faculty hiring

First, instead of the sponsoring religious organization choosing leadership, many religious schools are encouraged to have their leaders chosen through outside search committees, donors, or faculty associations. The justification is that the school will benefit from outside expertise and prominent stakeholder buy-in. Unfortunately, this can indirectly lead to a decoupling of the institution from its most foundational stakeholder—the sponsoring religious organization.¹⁵

Second, as the cost of running a college or university continues to climb, the burden on religious organizations does as well. Many religious institutions worry whether they can continue to maintain their core ecclesiastical responsibilities while funding increasingly costly academic institutions. These realities lead many religious institutions to increase student tuition, seek government assistance, or lean on outside donors. Each of these comes with increasing risk of religious disengagement.¹⁶

Third is the decoupling of faculty hiring from religious mission. On the surface this does not seem so daunting—don't universities control who they hire and more importantly who they promote? But as Burtchaell points out, with increasing disciplinary specialization, some academic departments feel they cannot evaluate faculty without

outside expertise. In so doing, many religious colleges are effectively outsourcing faculty evaluation and promotion to the academy.¹⁷

In this climate, it is important for religious schools to assert the rights of their students and their communities to learn and work in a religious setting. Freeman A. Hrabowski, noted scientist and university president, while speaking to Loyola University Chicago, taught faculty and staff that their “Jesuit values . . . are the foundation of everything at the university . . . and that faith is [their] ultimate advantage.”¹⁸ Catholic University president Peter Kilpatrick spoke on the importance of religious identity, stating: “We are serious about who we are.”¹⁹ President Linda Livingstone described how Baylor University is “unapologetically Christian.”²⁰ At BYU, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, former university president and now an apostle in the Church, recently proclaimed:

*BYU will become an “educational Mt. Everest” only to the degree it embraces its uniqueness, its singularity. We could mimic every other university in the world . . . , and the world would still say, “BYU who?” No, we must have the will to be different and to stand alone, if necessary, being a university second to none in its role primarily as an undergraduate teaching institution that is unequivocally true to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.*²¹

Leaders who can articulate a clear vision for religious identity are needed more than ever.

Let me next offer a word of encouragement to the administration and faculty of religious schools. While religious identity requires courageous leadership, it also calls for deep structural alignment. Take steps to ensure that religious governance remains strong at your college or university, beginning with the selection of university leadership. Our ecclesiastical leadership has encouraged our presidents to be the “chief moral and spiritual officer[s]” of our schools.²² That may not mean that a president has to have the formal religious standing of priest or rabbi, but it does mean that the selection criteria should include strengthening the religious mission of the institution. In our own academic governance across five

separate education institutions, that leadership decision is made by our Church leadership and not by outside search committees or powerful external stakeholders.

Preserving educational investment is difficult in an era of growing operating costs. It might be unrealistic to ask sponsoring religious organizations to underwrite all of the costs associated with running religious universities. I hope, however, that religious schools will courageously seek more sustainable and fewer cost-prohibitive approaches to the modern university. Self-reliant cost models may be one of the only ways religious universities maintain their viability and independence. Regardless, the more aligned a university is with the mission of its sponsoring religious institution, the greater the justification for ongoing financial support from that sponsoring institution.

Finally, a word about faculty hiring and promotion. Elder Holland, who chairs the executive committee of our board of education, has said that the hiring of faculty is the most important decision a university makes.²³ Religious mission benefits enormously at institutions that emphasize their faculty code of conduct or even their covenant commitment as part of faculty hiring and governance. For example, Wheaton College's faculty contract includes a covenant commitment. Baylor University has a similar faculty code of conduct in both hiring and ongoing employment. We have similar expectations of faculty at BYU and other colleges and universities in our Church Educational System. But to shape internal hiring and promotion across an entire university requires leadership that goes far beyond baseline ecclesiastical standards. To avoid outsourcing critical faculty decisions requires a knowledge of faculty scholarship and teaching deep inside the academic culture and administration.

The intent of this article has been to help religious universities and faith-oriented faculty to deepen their confidence in the power of religious strength identity. From Baylor to BYU, from Catholic University to Notre Dame, and at Pepperdine, Yeshiva, Wheaton College, and so many other institutions, there are nearly

one thousand religiously affiliated colleges and universities in the United States with over 1.5 million enrolled students. Colleges and universities across the country are preserving the light of religious mission. As secular forces sometimes bear down and make religiously affiliated schools feel isolated, it is increasingly important to understand that religious identity is not only important to a religious community, but it strengthens the academy and society more generally. Do not hide your light under a bushel; carry it with strength and conviction. Dare to be different in ways that are true to your distinctive light.

NOTES

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3. Charles W. Eliot, inaugural address as president of Harvard College, 19 October 1869; in Charles William Eliot, *Educational Reform: Essays and Addresses* (New York: Century Co., 1905), 8.

4. See Caroline Howard, ed., “America’s Best Value Colleges 2019,” *Forbes*, 24 April 2019, forbes.com/best-value-colleges.

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7. See Anderson, “Discovering Truth,” 53; also from expanded conversations between Anderson and the author.

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23. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland has asserted this statement in meetings with Church Educational System presidents and in leadership meetings with the author.



Going Forward in the Second Century

DALLIN H. OAKS

♦ *BYU Devotional Address, September 13, 2022*

INTRODUCTION



Dallin H. Oaks was serving as first counselor in the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when he delivered this address. As BYU approached its sesquicentennial, President Oaks and a number of BYU devotional speakers reflected on President Spencer W. Kimball’s challenge to “become a unique university in all of the world” (“The Second Century of Brigham Young University”). President Oaks’s counsel was born of long and deep observation of BYU and the American academy generally. He spoke of an experience in the 1970s when BYU broke with the educational establishment in order to assert eternal principles. He also challenged students to “dare to be different” (page 271; quoting Clark G. Gilbert, “Dare to Be Different,” pages 251–62) from the world when the world does not follow the Lord’s way, emphasizing the principle that the second commandment (love of neighbor) does not come ahead of the first great commandment (love of God).

*When higher education or
the world in general call
upon faculty to vary from
gospel standards, do we
“dare to be different”?*

— DALLIN H. OAKS



MY DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS, I am thrilled to be with you. As president of BYU for nine years, I heard many lectures and devotional addresses. The most memorable talks during that period were not those that only reaffirmed familiar subjects or introduced new facts but those that changed a way of thinking about a subject. I hope that something I say today will suggest or reinforce a helpful way of thinking about something important in your life.

I.

In one of the first devotional assemblies in the fall of 1975, President Spencer W. Kimball delivered his inspired address “The Second Century of Brigham Young University.”¹ I was then president of Brigham Young University, so I listened to and subsequently pondered his talk as intently as any person living.

The subject was that Brigham Young University has “a double heritage,”² being concerned with *both* “the secular and the spiritual.”³ Thus, President Kimball explained, BYU must not be shackled by “worldly ideologies and concepts.”⁴ “It must not [allow itself to] be made over in the image of the world.”⁵ As he neared his conclusion, he repeated that challenge:

As previous First Presidencies have said, and we say again to you, we expect (we do not simply hope) that Brigham Young University will . . . “become a unique university in all of the world!”⁶

What must BYU do in its second century to secure and magnify that uniqueness? The first way BYU will be unique is that it won’t desert or dilute existing truth. President Kimball explained:

BYU . . . must continue to resist false fashions in education, staying with those basic principles that have proved right and have guided good men and women and good universities over the centuries.⁷

A second way BYU will be a unique university is its focus on undergraduate education:

While the discovery of new knowledge must increase, there must always be a heavy and primary emphasis on . . . the quality of teaching at BYU . . . [that] includes a quality relationship between faculty and students.⁸

A third and vital source of uniqueness is our personal and institutional relationship with God:

We expect the natural unfolding of knowledge to occur as a result of scholarship, but there will always be that added dimension that the Lord can provide when we are qualified to receive and He chooses to speak.⁹

President Kimball also spoke about our relationship with other universities:

We can sometimes make concord with others, including scholars who have parallel purposes. . . .

In other instances, we must be willing to break with the educational establishment (not foolishly or cavalierly, but thoughtfully and for good reason) in order to find gospel ways to help mankind. Gospel methodology, concepts, and insights can help us to do what the world cannot do in its own frame of reference.¹⁰

Please note that President Kimball and other First Presidencies are not asking BYU to be a unique university just by being different. Our uniqueness will always be rooted in our following the inspiration that we prayerfully seek in our personal work and that we receive from the university administration and our prophetic leaders. When leaders such as Elder Jeffrey R. Holland and Commissioner Clark G.

Gilbert and President Kevin J Worthen repeat the same counsel and give the same challenges, hear it for what it is: inspired direction for what BYU and we must be and become.

Speaking particularly to the faculty and leadership of this university of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I ask, “How are we measuring up after almost a half century since a prophet spoke these fundamental challenges?” Elder Holland emphasized this challenge in his inspired address to the faculty and leaders last year:

When you look at President Kimball’s talk again, may I ask you to pay particular attention to that sweet prophet’s effort to ask that we be unique? In his discourse, President Kimball used the word unique eight times and the word special eight times. It seems clear to me . . . that BYU will become an “educational Mt. Everest” only to the degree it embraces its uniqueness, its singularity.¹¹

President Russell M. Nelson explained the nature and purpose of that *uniqueness* when he contrasted two different educational goals:

*There is a major difference, however, between the responsibilities of secular educators and my responsibility as the senior Apostle on earth. Their job is to educate and prepare you for your **mortal** experience—meaning, how to succeed in your life’s work. My responsibility is to educate and prepare you also for your **immortal** experience—meaning, how to gain eternal life.¹²*

The uniqueness of our Church education has the same purpose: education for eternity as well as education for our mortal experience. We go forward with that goal.

II.

We must understand that our having an additional purpose for education will not be welcomed by many educators. It may even be opposed by them and others and even by government regulators.

Here I remind us of BYU's experience nearly fifty years ago when challenged by what has come to be known generally as Title IX.

A 1972 act of Congress forbade discrimination “on the basis of sex . . . under *any* education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”¹³ But the proposed administrative *regulations* expanded that direction by asserting federal control over *all* programs or activities of any educational *institution* receiving such assistance.¹⁴

Alarmed that this would immediately extend federal control over all institutional decisions that specified differences between men and women—even possibly forbidding separate dormitories for men and women—BYU immediately challenged the breadth of the proposed regulations. Testifying before a congressional subcommittee in 1975, I expressed our support for the overall nondiscrimination objectives of Title IX but protested that the proposed regulations went too far in carrying federal control beyond the authorizing act of Congress into impermissible conflicts with the independence of private colleges and the religious freedom of Church-related institutions.¹⁵

Before 1975 ended, we had attracted significant institutional and media support for our position. In less than a year, our focused objections prevailed. The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) scaled back its formal enforcement of Title IX. The effect on BYU is summarized in this 1976 letter from the director of HEW's Office for Civil Rights: “BYU's Code of Honor, which is derived from religious tenets of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, provides for evenhanded treatment of the sexes.”¹⁶ The letter further stated that

*in those few instances where evenhanded treatment of employees and students would conflict with the religious tenets [of the Church under several cited sections of the regulations] . . . , BYU is granted an exemption from those requirements.*¹⁷

President Kimball's second-century address commissioned us “to break with the educational establishment” when necessary “to find gospel ways to help mankind.” Where would BYU and other Church-related colleges and universities be today if BYU had not

dared to resist the government's 1974 proposal to significantly expand its control over private higher education?

President Kimball affirmed our efforts in these words from his second-century address:

*We want you to keep free as a university—free of government control, not only for the sake of the university and the Church but also for the sake of our government. Our government, state and federal, and our people are best served by free colleges and universities, not by institutions that are compliant out of fears over funding.*¹⁸

I remind you that President Kimball's second-century address and this Title IX episode occurred long before most of you current students and many of our current faculty were born. Ancient history? Yes, but important history to remember when current worldly pressures are focused on our differences.

Those who deviate from a majority are often made to feel like ignorant holdouts on subjects in which everyone else is more enlightened. When higher education or the world in general call upon faculty to vary from gospel standards, do we "dare to be different"? I borrow that phrase from Commissioner Gilbert in his recent essay in *Deseret Magazine* on preserving religious identity in higher education.¹⁹ I will return to "dare to be different" as I discuss other challenges.

III.

I now speak to you as students in the second century of this university. Where are you in the differences that make us unique?

Commissioner Gilbert recently showed a humorous *Candid Camera* demonstration of the effect of being different. Smile with me as we resolve not to be intimidated like the poor fellow portrayed here. [A video of an elevator experiment was shown.²⁰]

More important than what you do as a student are the choices you are making in your personal life—the priorities you are adopting consciously or subconsciously. Are you going forward against the world's opposition?

A fundamental fact of mortal life is that there must be “opposition in all things.”²¹ The scriptures illustrate that contrast in many ways. For example, the Savior taught His followers to “forsake the world, and save your souls.”²² He described His disciples as the “salt” or “savour” of the earth who would leaven the rest of the mass and be an influence that would give light to all.²³ The Savior told His followers, “Go ye into the world, and care not for the world.”²⁴ “For all these things do the nations of the world seek after,” He explained, and then He said, “But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.”²⁵

In contrast, He taught about the other extreme: “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”²⁶

Our personal choices between the extremes of the Lord’s way and the world’s way are made in the context of love. I am sure that President Spencer W. Kimball’s second-century address, with which I began, was motivated by love—love of God, whom he served as a prophet; love of the children of God, whom he taught; and love of this university that served them.

I feel that same love as I try to elevate your personal choices. I love God, and I also love this university that has been so important in my life for more than seventy years. Everything I am trying to say to you now is also motivated by love—especially my love for you, my brothers and sisters. Here is some counsel you should consider as you make your choices.

Last year I spoke in general conference on the need for a church.²⁷ When we dare to be different, we choose to engage fully in the restored Church. We keep our covenants. We have the courage to follow all the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. We stand up personally for those who are marginalized. I will speak further of each of those ideas in my following discussion.

Sometimes we hear of Latter-day Saints who have honorably concluded an arduous Church calling—such as a full-time mission or a heavy leadership commitment—and are now taking what they call “a vacation from Church service.” If tempted to take such a “vacation,” you should remember that this soon leads to forgetting gospel

truths—such as the first commandment to love God—and it also leads to forgetting gospel covenants. Do not risk that.

When we persist in Church activity and service, we increase our influence for good with family and associates. Our light shines to influence those who see our good works. Our example will be powerful. That is illustrated by this experience of a brother-in-law of my wife, Kristen, when he was in junior high school here in Utah about fifty years ago.

In his class there was a boy who was very different in dress and demeanor and sometimes in words and actions. He was easy to ridicule. Junior high school was difficult for him, especially because trouble from a large bully made his life miserable. The bully and his group would taunt him and verbally tease him and regularly beat him up against his locker.

On the last day of school, everyone was in the gym playing games and talking. This boy was playing a game of chess by himself—he had a board and chess pieces, and he would move from one side of the board to another and was happily playing alone. When the bully saw this, he went over and hit the chessboard, scattering the pieces all over the gym. Suddenly the gym went totally silent. Everyone had their eyes fixed on the bully, the victim, and the scattered chess pieces.

Kristen's brother-in-law could not stand it. He said he didn't care if the bully punched him out. He stood up, walked over, and began picking up chess pieces off the floor. And here is what makes this example great. Immediately, many in the crowd did the same—uniting to protect the victim.

Thirty years later, a well-dressed executive boarding an airplane approached my brother-in-law, who recognized this man as the boy who had been taunted in the gym so long ago. "Thanks, Holbrook," he said. "Thanks for being a friend."

When Kristen shared that experience in a recent talk, she added:

We have among us some who are hurting. We may not be aware of their struggles, but we can make all the difference by our attention, by standing up and bearing testimony, and by listening to the promptings to make a visit or a phone call or get out of bed when we don't feel like it. I promise if you stand up and serve, it will touch lives in an eternal way that you can only begin to comprehend now.

In that way, by following the loving ministering to the afflicted that was taught by Jesus Christ, we can proceed toward what President Nelson described as

*the unrivaled difference that belief in God and His Son, Jesus Christ, has in a person's life. There is simply nothing to compare with the refining, ennobling strength and meaning that come into the life of a devoted believer and servant.*²⁸

On that same subject, I loved President Nelson's plea to the sisters:

*Thirty-six years ago, in 1979, President Spencer W. Kimball made a profound prophecy about the impact that covenant-keeping women would have on the future of the Lord's Church. [President Nelson then quoted this prophecy by President Kimball]: "Much of the major growth that is coming to the Church in the last days will come because many of the good women of the world . . . will be drawn to the Church in large numbers. This will happen to the degree that the women of the Church reflect righteousness and articulateness in their lives and . . . are seen as . . . different—in happy ways—from the women of the world."*²⁹

President Nelson continued:

*We, your brethren, need your strength, your conversion, your conviction, your ability to lead, your wisdom, and your voices. The kingdom of God is not and cannot be complete without women who make sacred covenants and then keep them, women who can speak with the power and authority of God!*³⁰

IV.

In the first year of his presidency, President Nelson challenged us "to stand out; be different from the world."³¹ He continued:

You and I know that you are to be a light to the world. Therefore, the Lord needs you to look like, sound like, act like, and dress like a

true disciple of Jesus Christ. Yes, you are living in the world, but you have very different standards from the world to help you avoid the stain of the world.

. . . And if you are sometimes called “weird,” wear that distinction as a badge of honor and be happy that your light is shining brightly in this ever-darkening world!

Set a standard for the rest of the world! Embrace being different!³²

Of course, “being different” does not suggest being different from your brothers and sisters who follow the Lord and His servants. It means being different from the world’s ways when those of the world do not follow the Lord’s way.

We must not forget the Savior’s teaching that “the first and great commandment” “in the law” is to “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind,” and the second commandment “is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”³³ The love of neighbor—however important—does not come ahead of love of God and obedience to His commandments. If we truly love God and serve Him as He has taught us, we will love our neighbor as God loves him or her and as He would have us love and serve them.

God’s incomprehensible love for His children does not excuse us from accountability when we break His commandments. There is enough mercy in the merciful Atonement and the incomparable glory of the various kingdoms and degrees that follow the Final Judgment to prove God’s love for all His children. Jesus showed this in His mortal teachings. He was ever-loving but invariably direct in His commandments and expectations. To the woman taken in adultery, He refrained from condemning her then but concluded by directing her to “go, and sin no more.”³⁴ And He concluded the rigorous teaching of the Sermon on the Mount with the incomparable direction “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”³⁵ We proceed toward that divine condition by priorities that follow the Savior without being compromised by worldly values and behavior.

Keeping gospel standards does not make you second class or condemn your example to obscurity. All of us know of persons whose

performance is enhanced in quality and visibility by being different from the crowd.³⁶ President Nelson taught us this a year ago:

*Please believe me when I say that when your spiritual foundation is built solidly upon Jesus Christ, you have **no need to fear**. As you are true to your covenants made in the temple, you will be strengthened by His power.³⁷*

My dear brothers and sisters, I testify of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our Master and our Teacher and our Savior. I testify that we are led by a prophet, and I invoke the blessings of the Lord upon you as you seek to serve our Savior through the teachings of His prophetic leaders. 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. Kimball, “Second Century.”

3. Kimball, “Second Century.”

4. Kimball, “Second Century.”

5. Kimball, “Second Century.”

6. Kimball, “Second Century.”

7. Kimball, “Second Century.”

8. Kimball, “Second Century.”

9. Kimball, “Second Century.”

10. Kimball, “Second Century.”

11. Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Second Half of the Second Century of Brigham Young University,” BYU university conference address, 23 August 2021; emphasis in original; quoting Spencer W. Kimball, “Installation of and Charge to the President,” address at the inauguration of Jeffrey R. Holland as BYU president, 14 November 1980; see also Kimball, “Second Century.”

12. Russell M. Nelson, “Choices for Eternity,” worldwide devotional for young adults, 15 May 2022, [churchofjesuschrist.org/study/broadcasts/worldwide-devotional-for-young-adults/2022/05/12nelson](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/broadcasts/worldwide-devotional-for-young-adults/2022/05/12nelson); emphasis in original.

13. Title IX of the Education Amendments Act, 20 U.S.C. sec. 1681 (1972); emphasis added.

14. See “Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex,” in Education Programs and Activities Receiving or Benefiting from Federal Financial Assistance,

Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), Part II in *Federal Register* 39, no. 120 (20 June 1974), 45 C.F.R., Part 86.

15. Testimony of Dallin H. Oaks before the Postsecondary Education Subcommittee of the Education and Labor Committee, United States House of Representatives, 24 June 1975.

16. Letter to Dallin H. Oaks from Director Martin H. Gerry, Office for Civil Rights, HEW, 12 August 1976.

17. Letter from Martin H. Gerry.

18. Kimball, “Second Century.”

19. See Clark G. Gilbert’s brilliant essay “Dare to Be Different: Preserving the Distinctive Light of Religious Universities,” in “Dare to Be Different: The Fate of the Religious University,” special issue, *Deseret Magazine*, September 2022, 40–45, deseret.com/2022/9/14/23319209/elder-clark-gilbert-religious-universities-should-dare-to-be-different.

20. The video shown was “Face the Rear,” a 1962 episode of *Candid Camera*.

21. 2 Nephi 2:11.

22. Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 16:29.

23. See Matthew 5:13–16.

24. Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 6:25.

25. Luke 12:30, 31; see also Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 6:38.

26. Mark 8:36.

27. See Dallin H. Oaks, “The Need for a Church,” *Liahona*, November 2021.

28. Russell M. Nelson, “Why Have Faith Now? LDS President Russell M. Nelson Explains During Phoenix-Area Visit,” Opinion, [azcentral.com](https://azcentral.com/story/opinion/op-ed/2019/02/10/2776270002), 10 February 2019, azcentral.com/story/opinion/op-ed/2019/02/10/2776270002.

29. Russell M. Nelson, “A Plea to My Sisters,” *Ensign*, November 2015; quoting Spencer W. Kimball, “Women’s Fireside Addresses: The Role of Righteous Women,” *Ensign*, November 1979; quoted in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2006), 222–23.

30. Nelson, “A Plea to My Sisters.”

31. Russell M. Nelson, in Russell M. Nelson and Wendy W. Nelson, “Hope of Israel,” worldwide youth devotional, 3 June 2018, churchofjesuschrist.org/study/new-era/2018/08-se/hope-of-israel.

32. Nelson, “Hope of Israel.”

33. Matthew 22:36–39.

34. John 8:11.

35. Matthew 5:48.

36. See, for example, *Why I Believe* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 2002).

37. Russell M. Nelson, “The Temple and Your Spiritual Foundation,” *Liahona*, November 2021; emphasis in original.

ON LEARNING AND LIGHT AT BYU



We have a marvelous promise for expansion of our ways of knowing: the magnification of the soul, body, and spirit and intelligence—light and truth—in each of us. Thus God’s glory is the growth of our intelligence, our unique light, the original matter of our very being.

— ELAINE S. MARSHALL



On Learning and Light at BYU: Ten Perspectives

INTRODUCTION

Doctrine and Covenants 88 states that learners and teachers must work together to create an environment where the Spirit can be present. Each individual has a role to play, whether they be faculty, staff, or students. Over the years, many have spoken at Brigham Young University about learning and teaching in the light of the gospel as well as about maintaining the university's unique mission. The following ten selections focus on these ideas while highlighting a variety of voices throughout BYU's history, including many of the university's past presidents.

These selections are intended to be a starting point for further exploration on the themes of this book and to support faculty, staff, and students as they build on BYU's rich and unique mission of learning in the light. The full text for nearly every selection can be found at speeches.byu.edu/envisioning-BYU, along with additional related talks.



THE TRUE SPIRIT OF THE BYU

FRANKLIN S. HARRIS

President of Brigham Young University, 1921–45

♦ *Inaugural Address as BYU President, October 17, 1921*



THERE HAS GROWN out of the history of the institution [Brigham Young University] a particular mandate that must be respected—a certain fire that must be kept burning. This has been peculiar to the institution ever since President Brigham Young sent Doctor Karl G. Maeser here to open its doors. It is difficult to define just what that something is, but it has to do with the lives of students apart from their regular schoolwork. It establishes in their minds wholesome ideals and gives them a respect for proper living. It helps them to form good habits and to throw off bad ones. It teaches them to enjoy uplifting amusements rather than to seek corrupt diversions. It teaches them the sacredness of the family as a unit in society, and it imparts to them a particular responsibility as a citizen. It has nothing to do with long-faced sanctimoniousness but is rather that quality of high spirituality that teaches wisdom and moderation in all of the activities of life.

The first task of the future is to preserve at the institution this spirit that comes to us from the past—the true spirit of the Brigham Young University. This spirit places character above learning and indelibly burns into the consciousness of the student the fact that the most enduring joy is dependent on spiritual growth which looks toward eternal progression.



THE CALLING OF BYU

ERNEST L. WILKINSON

President of Brigham Young University, 1951–71

♦ *BYU Faculty Address, September 18, 1962*



AT BYU WE HAVE a twofold responsibility—a grave responsibility which demands a great deal of our faculty and staff:

1. *Proper academic development*—to meet the tests and challenges of the world.

2. *Proper spiritual development*—to meet the basic inner needs of the student and to help him understand his relationship to his fellow man and to God, the Heavenly Father. . . .

In practical effect, this means that each of us at BYU should be living and walking examples of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We should strive as mightily as we can to live up to the principles of the Church every day of the week and not just on the Sabbath. For good or for ill, we stand as examples before our students. Any member of the faculty or staff who may scoff at and deride spiritual values is impairing his usefulness at this university. Though he clothes his skepticism in brilliant and fascinating verbiage, he ultimately will be an unhappy person in this particular campus community. Further, what can a student's evaluation be when he observes that some of us pay only nominal attention to the spiritual principles that the institution publicly espouses? I strongly declare that once we become associated with this institution, we also carry upon our shoulders the responsibility

of exemplary living. This may not be easy, but it is certainly a realistic factor in our lives. If we treat this obligation lightly, we could unwittingly, as well as deliberately, offend or disillusion a student to the point that he finds it very difficult to gain or retain a testimony of the faith. . . .

No student can truly succeed in this modern world—by the gauge of the *whole* man—without the firm support of religious devotion. His physical achievements of the future, no matter how impressive from the secular viewpoint, are but a mockery if he fails to recognize his deep obligation to God, the Father. If the student does not become deeply aware of his great personal need for spiritual motivation and does not work actively to obtain it, then our world is truly lost! Thus the obligation upon us, who deal so intimately with the youth of today, is indeed sacred and of preeminent importance.



WOMEN AND EDUCATION

DALLIN H. OAKS

President of Brigham Young University, 1971–80

♦ *BYU Devotional Address, February 12, 1974*



OUR YOUNG WOMEN properly aspire to and prepare themselves for the experiences and blessings of motherhood, which is their highest calling and opportunity for service. . . .

Our young women's primary orientation toward motherhood is not inconsistent with their diligent pursuit of an education, even their efforts in courses of study that are vocationally related. . . .

A young woman's education should prepare her for more than the responsibilities of motherhood. It should prepare her for the entire period of her life.

Many of our young women will need to earn a living for themselves because they do not marry, because they do not marry until after some years of employment, or because they have been widowed or through other circumstances have been compelled to assume the responsibilities of the family breadwinner. A mother who must earn a living for the family in addition to performing the duties of motherhood probably has as great a need for education as any person in the world.

There are other reasons why it is important for our young women to receive a proper education. Education is more than vocational. Education should improve our minds, strengthen our bodies, heighten our cultural awareness, and increase our spirituality. It should prepare us for greater service to the human family. Such an

education will improve a woman's ability to function as an informed and effective teacher of her sons and daughters and as a worthy and wise counselor and companion to her husband. Some have observed that the mother's vital teaching responsibility makes it even more important to have educated mothers than to have educated fathers. "When you teach a boy, you are just teaching another individual," President Harold B. Lee quoted, "but when you teach a woman or a girl, you are teaching a whole family."¹

One of the most important purposes of a university education is to prepare men and women to be responsible and intelligent leaders and participants in the lives of their families, in their church, and in their communities. That kind of education is needed by young men and young women alike. In short, we make no distinction between young men and young women in our conviction about the importance of an education and in our commitment to providing that education.

NOTE

1. Harold B. Lee, referencing Catherine E. Beecher, *A Treatise on Domestic Economy: For the Use of Young Ladies at Home, and at School*, rev. ed. (Boston: Thomas H. Webb and Company, 1843), 37: "The proper education of a man decides the welfare of an individual; but educate a woman, and the interests of a whole family are secured"; in Lee, "Place of Mothers in the Plan of Teaching the Gospel in the Home," *Relief Society Magazine*, January 1965, 8.



ON BEING TEACHABLE

KATE L. KIRKHAM

BYU Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior

♦ *BYU Devotional Address, May 19, 1987*



WHAT DOES IT MEAN to be teachable? This is a difficult concept for me to explain. I have experienced it in myself and in others with more certainty than I can articulate a description. Because of our individuality, the expression varies. The common characteristics seem to be (although listed separately, these form a tangible whole) a sense of one's incompleteness—a gnawing awareness of a desired, divine, and future state; a contrite spirit; a humble heart; a knowledge of one's worth; a reverence for the worth of others; the trusting readiness often most apparent in little children; a belief in one's abilities and one's capacity to grow and to contribute; and an acknowledgement of our interdependency as sons and daughters of our heavenly parents.

Perhaps, fundamentally, being teachable means that we *daily* open ourselves to the *consistency* of God's love for us. We accept we *are* loved and make real in our complex, earthly lives the cornerstone commandments to love our God and our neighbors as ourselves.

We can acknowledge that no matter who we are or where we are, encoded into each of us are two things: (1) this common language of learning that is love and (2) a most common bond of purpose: we came to learn and "to speak one with another concerning the welfare of [our] souls"¹—in fact, to progress eternally.

Our capacity to be taught is infinite—whatever our current circumstances, whatever the conditions of our physical abilities, and whatever status we may hold in the eyes of others. It is often easy to move away from such a compelling awareness of our potential. We can both allow and assist others in getting in the way of our being teachable. We can find for a variety of reasons—fear, doubt, convenience, comfort—ways to deny our capacity for learning, to lose faith in ourselves, to lose faith in the love of those around us, or to lose faith in God’s love for us. By not believing in our capacity to learn (even from our mistakes), by not believing in our capacity to influence others for good, we attempt to deny the power of God in us. . . .

For each of us and for myself, I pray that we will realize that our obedience; our agency; our acknowledgment of God’s love for us and our love for Him, for our neighbor, and for ourselves; our testimony of the truthfulness of His gospel; and our willingness to trust His further instruction are never more evident than when we can echo in a small way in our lives the words of our Elder Brother: “Here am I, send me.”²

NOTES

1. Moroni 6:5.
2. Abraham 3:27; see also Isaiah 6:8 and 2 Nephi 16:8.



MT. EVEREST FOUND: WHAT BYU AND UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION CAN DO FOR EACH OTHER

REX E. LEE

President of Brigham Young University, 1989–95

♦ *BYU University Conference Address, August 27, 1990*



ON TWO SEPARATE occasions . . . President Kimball expressed the hope that BYU would become an “educational Mt. Everest.”¹ It has been a useful metaphor because it has reminded us of the need to strive for excellence, to achieve excellence in fact, and to stand high enough that the world will see us. Not everyone has interpreted that admonition in exactly the same way. . . .

I conclude that, though research and graduate programs are clearly mountains we must climb, our Mt. Everest is to be found in undergraduate teaching. For reasons on which I will elaborate in just a moment, this does not mean any de-emphasis on either the importance of research or our commitment to existing graduate programs or perhaps even others. But these are not our principal ultimate mission. Our comparative advantage, our highest and best use, our greatest potential to make a worthwhile contribution to the people whose contributions support us and to society as a whole is to be found in teaching young men and women during that period of time in their lives between their graduation from high school and graduation from college.

I realize that this is not some great new intellectual breakthrough for a BYU president. Virtually all of my predecessors have reached the same conclusion. But over the last year and a quarter, I have reached it for myself. I have gained my own testimony, which I bear to you today, and I would like to give you some specific reasons why I think it is correct.

The first is as compelling as it is simple. The teaching that we do here consists of an amalgamation of spiritual and secular truths, offered in an atmosphere that recognizes the reality of the Restoration. Our educational objective is to prepare the whole person for the complete life. That kind of education includes learning that one could obtain at any other good university coupled with a value system anchored to restored truth. It would be quite misleading to try to identify which part of that combination is more important. For us, the two are inseparable. The genius of BYU—and also its heart and soul—is that we are the only four-year university that is attempting to join the two, and we do so because of the effect that the combination has on individual minds, attitudes, and souls.

NOTE

1. Spencer W. Kimball, “Installation of and Charge to the President,” address at the inauguration of Jeffrey R. Holland as BYU president, 14 November 1980; see Spencer W. Kimball, “The Second Century of Brigham Young University,” BYU devotional address, 10 October 1975.



THE SEARCHING MIND

MARTHA MOFFITT PEACOCK

BYU Associate Professor of Art History

♦ *BYU Devotional Address, May 21, 1996*



IT SEEMS TO ME that one of the greatest protections we can have in the world of reason and knowledge is a carefully cultivated questioning mind—a mind that is not easily swayed by every idea thrust forward at it and one that stops to ponder and thoughtfully examine in the context of gospel principles all that is presented. This carefully cultivated questioning mind is what I would call the searching mind. It is an intellect energized by the challenge of a good problem or a significant task; when so engaged, it is led to probe deeply and ponder carefully all aspects of the problem or task. Easy answers from supposed or self-promoting authorities are not readily adopted. Rather, the searching mind questions deeply to produce genuine, grounded understanding. Such questioning is not, therefore, done randomly, willy-nilly, nor is it performed simply with the intention of questioning everything or undermining all understanding. The searching mind questions, probes, and ponders with direction and purpose. The principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ provide this direction and purpose. Such a foundation keeps the questioning mind focused on those questions and modes of understanding that are most likely to produce fruitful outcomes. More than providing easy answers, such a focused, searching mind is led to grow, develop, and expand by paying attention to significant questions and fruitful modes of answering those questions.

Students frequently come to me in my art history classes and say that they have read two opposing sides of a particular scholarly debate and that they are equally convinced by both positions. I routinely tell them that they have not read carefully enough, nor have they allowed time for their minds to rigorously sift through the evidence and draw their own conclusions. One episode of neglectful reasoning over an art historical debate will certainly not produce dire results for the student's life (except perhaps for an art history grade), but if the individual never learns how to exercise the ability to judiciously question, probe, and evaluate ideas presented, the long-term consequences on a lifetime journey may indeed be harmful, perhaps endangering its entire course. I would suggest, therefore, that developing a thoughtfully questioning and evaluative mind—right now, while so many of you have such great opportunities as students at this university—is vital to your capacity to weather storms along your own journey. . . .

In conclusion, I end by returning to my original question: “How do my religious beliefs inspire my scholarship?” They are so intertwined that I can scarcely separate them. So much of what I am as a scholar is built upon my faith in an eternal plan. It is this faith and my many opportunities of applying it to art history at this university that give me the strength to critically evaluate the opinions of others in my field. When those opinions do not seem valid or constructive, it is frequently the gospel and the understanding it provides that motivate me to search more deeply and inspire me with the logic to thwart such arguments. I am grateful for the many experiences Heavenly Father has given me to develop a questioning, searching mind. Clad in the protection of a searching mind informed by the gospel of Jesus Christ, our journey will be productive, even though challenging.



BRIGHT MINDS AND BROKEN HEARTS

CHERYL BROWN

BYU Professor of Applied Linguistics and
Associate Academic Vice President

♦ *BYU Devotional Address, January 28, 1997*



I AM GOING TO speak about the relationship between learning and humility. I am proceeding from the assumption that, because we are associated here at a university, all of us are interested in learning. I am also assuming that that interest is even stronger here than at most universities because we have been commanded to “seek learning, even by study and also by faith.”¹ . . .

. . . Humility is the soil in which the seed of faith is planted.² In fact, *humility* and *humus*—“material . . . forming the organic portion of soil”³—come from the same root word.⁴ And we are commanded, as I said earlier, to “seek learning, even by study and also by faith.” We must plant our faith in our humility.

A few years back I served on the Faculty Advisory Committee with Dana Griffen, a professor in the Geology Department. As we were contemplating at that time what it meant to have a BYU education, one where learning was enlightened by faith, Dana told of an experience he had had in his research. I have asked his permission to tell you that story today because I think it illustrates so clearly the relationship between humility, study, and faith.

At the time of this experience, Dana was involved in a research project in which he was trying to make a synthetic variety of a common mineral with uncommon elements—ones that as chemical

components do not occur naturally in nature. He was using equipment that would go to very high levels of pressure and temperature, and he had been working on this problem for quite a while. He tried every level of temperature and pressure that seemed reasonable, based, as all good research is, on the work presented by others. But nothing Dana tried was working, although he was totally convinced that the synthesis could be done.

One night, after trying everything he could think of, he was totally frustrated with the work. He knew that finding the right temperature and pressure was probably not a matter of great import in the eternal scheme of things, but he also knew that it was important to him, so he felt that the Lord would help him in some way. At his home, in his frustration, he humbly went to the Lord in prayer: “Father, I’ve done everything I know how to do. I know you know how to do this.” Immediately he had a clear impression, almost like a voice, that gave a specific temperature and pressure, and the pressure was at least 50 percent higher than what anyone had thought reasonable. The next morning Dana went quickly to the lab. He took the elements, set the equipment to the pressure and temperature he had heard the night before, and, within twenty minutes, produced the long sought-for synthesis. He has replicated the experiment numerous times since then. If we do the work, seeking learning by study, and are humble, we can also seek learning by faith.

NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 88:118.
2. Alma 32:16, 25–29.
3. *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed., s.v. “humus.”
4. See *Merriam-Webster*, s.v. “humility,” “humble,” and “humus.”



PERSPECTIVES ON KNOWING IN A HUMAN SCIENCE

ELAINE S. MARSHALL
BYU Professor of Nursing

♦ *BYU Forum Address, May 25, 1998*



BEFORE OUR MORTAL parents were privileged with God to clothe us in flesh, we were spirit. But even before our divine parents endowed us with bodies of spirit, we existed uniquely, autonomously, and with agency. We were called “intelligence.”¹

We learn from the 93rd section of the Doctrine and Covenants that intelligence is “light and truth.”² We were “in the beginning with God” as intelligences that “[were] not created or made, neither indeed can be.”³ We always had substance, value, and agency. The scriptures tell us, “Otherwise there is no existence.”⁴ We are told that “the glory of God is intelligence”⁵ and that “whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.”⁶

These passages are often interpreted as the acquisition of external knowledge and skills, but that is a short measure of the full meaning of our potential. We have a marvelous promise for expansion of our ways of knowing: the magnification of the soul, body, and spirit and intelligence—light and truth—in each of us. Thus God’s glory is the growth of our intelligence, our unique light, the original matter of our very being. Intelligences could grow and receive more light by cleaving to one another and could learn. I find it no coincidence and profoundly

significant that our seminal divinity—that which makes you *you* and me *me*—is light and truth and is called by God “intelligence.”

As we become entangled in a telestial world, our lights meet with earthly bushels. When we speak of the parable of bushels,⁷ we often refer to the hiding of talents or skills. But I believe the real danger of bushels is that our ways of thinking, of pursuing knowledge, become narrow and obscured. As we cover our lights with false or rigid assumptions and futile intellectual pursuits, our intelligence may be diminished. We forget who we are: we are intelligence.

C. S. Lewis affirmed the pursuit of knowledge “in the sure confidence that by so doing we are . . . advancing to the vision of God.”⁸ He said:

The intellectual life is not the only road to God, nor the safest, but we find it to be a road. . . .

. . . The life of learning, humbly offered to God, [may be] . . . one of the appointed approaches to the Divine reality.⁹

It is my dream and my passion as a scholar that we who have the blessing and privilege to study may open our visions to learn from each other both as scholars and as human beings, expand our perspectives of knowing, and recognize the promise of the divine in our learning and God as the source of our knowing.

NOTES

1. See Doctrine and Covenants 93:29; Abraham 3:21–22.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 93:36.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 93:29.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 93:30.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 93:36.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 130:18.
7. See Matthew 5:15–16; Mark 4:21–25; Luke 8:16–18; Luke 11:33–36; 3 Nephi 12:15–16.
8. C. S. Lewis, “Learning in War-Time,” in *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (New York: Macmillan, 1949), 49.
9. Lewis, “Learning in War-Time,” 50, 54.



CITIZENSHIP, RESEARCH, TEACHING: THE BYU WAY

CECIL O. SAMUELSON

President of Brigham Young University, 2003–14

♦ *BYU University Conference Address, August 26, 2008*



AT BYU, OUR PRIMARY and major focus has been and must be on our teaching and learning responsibilities. This is true with respect to both our academics and our spiritually strengthening activities. If we are asked to choose between the interests of our students and anything else, there is really no choice. We do research, serious inquiry, or creative work because it enhances the learning and teaching environment for our students. We do not look at these efforts to provide financial support for the university generally, although we do compete for grants and strive to have these activities be largely self-sustaining. Thus we see these efforts to create or identify new knowledge and to enhance scholarship on the part of the faculty as supportive of, rather than competing with, our involvements with students. . . .

We want to help students kindle curiosity and the fire of inquiry and to become “bilingual.”¹ And we would like to identify, define, and elaborate a desirable, possible, and practical role for inquiry, creativity, and research integral to learning and teaching at our primarily undergraduate teaching and learning university.

If you are tracking with me, you might at this juncture say, “We agree with all that has been said. How are we going to contribute to

accomplishing what has been envisioned for BYU?” That is a great question, and a part of me wishes that I could give a clear, succinct, and insightful answer that would make further thought or discussion of the matter unnecessary. Happily, the other part of me realizes, as do most of you, that it is in the processes and activities of thinking, deliberating, discussing, testing, trying, changing, working, praying, and listening to each other and the Spirit that we make the heaven-intended progress that we must make. Learning “line upon line, precept upon precept”² is more than a catchy scriptural phrase. It is the process that each of us, and certainly this institution, must go through to reach our eternal goals.

NOTES

1. Spencer W. Kimball, “The Second Century of Brigham Young University,” BYU devotional address, 10 October 1975.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 98:12.



THIS IS A STUDENT

KEVIN J WORTHEN

President of Brigham Young University, 2014–2023

♦ *BYU University Conference Address, August 22, 2022*



I AM REMINDED OF the story of legendary football coach Vince Lombardi. In 1960, the Lombardi-coached Green Bay Packers lost the NFL championship game to the Philadelphia Eagles, 17–13, with the final drive by the Packers ending just short of the goal line on the last play of the game. Given the nature of sports, I am certain there were a lot of discussions during the off-season about what innovations the Packers might use to get over the top, what adjustments might alter the result in a future championship game, and what shiny new thing might make the difference. In that context, with everyone waiting for the new direction, Lombardi began his first meeting with the team in 1961 with a simple but powerful statement: “Gentlemen,” he said, holding a pigskin in his right hand, ‘this is a football.’”¹

Vince Lombardi thus reminded the team—who were so anxious to improve—that they should not lose focus on the key fundamentals. . . .

Let me begin the school year with this simple but powerful observation: “This is a student.” And this is a student, and this is a student, and these are students. [A series of student portraits was shown.] This is why we exist. This is the primary focus of our mission. As I noted in that initial annual university conference address in 2014:

At the end of the day, students are the product we produce. . . . How they turn out—what they do and, more important, who they are—is the ultimate metric by which our work will be measured.²

... These are students—disciples of Jesus Christ who, led by prophets, can provide uplift to a world yearning for hope and joy.

This kind of student requires a unique kind of education: an education that requires a unique kind of faculty, staff, and administrators—faculty, staff, and administrators who prioritize the eternal development of their students over the praise and prestige of other pursuits.

More important, this kind of education requires faculty, staff, and administrators who are disciples of Jesus Christ, motivated by love of God and of His children to bring others to Christ, who is the one true source of all light.³ We will succeed in this remarkable mission only to the extent that we focus on Him in all we do. As the mission statement makes clear: “Any education is inadequate which does not emphasize that His is the only name given under heaven whereby mankind can be saved.”⁴

NOTES

1. David Maraniss, *When Pride Still Mattered: A Life of Vince Lombardi* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999), 274. As reported by David Maraniss, Lombardi’s biographer, wide receiver “Max McGee, from the rear of the squad, delivered the immortal retort, ‘Uh, Coach, could you slow down a little. You’re going too fast for us’” (274).

2. Kevin J Worthen, “The Why of the Y,” BYU annual university conference address, 26 August 2014; emphasis added.

3. See 3 Nephi 18:24; Doctrine and Covenants 88:6–13.

4. The Mission of Brigham Young University (4 November 1981); emphasis added.

AFTERWORD



Our task, I submit, is to claim in our day
the prophecies of the past.

— C. SHANE REESE



KARL G MAES
MEMORIAL

Becoming BYU: An Inaugural Response

C. SHANE REESE

♦ *Address at his Inauguration as BYU President,
September 19, 2023*

INTRODUCTION



It may strike some as odd for President C. Shane Reese to speak of “becoming BYU” moments after receiving stewardship of the university. Is not the institution he was asked to lead already BYU? But President Reese clearly had in mind something more than BYU’s name. As President Reese said, “Our task is to become the university that prophets have foretold” (page 306). He then quoted President Spencer

W. Kimball’s admonition to become “the fully anointed university of the Lord about which so much has been spoken in the past” (Kimball, “The Second Century of Brigham Young University”). “Becoming BYU” refers not just to the name of BYU but to how well BYU measures up to its prophetic potential in the eyes of God.

President Reese enumerated several dimensions of BYU’s prophetic mission, including strengthening its student-centric approach; maintaining a focus on undergraduate teaching; promoting the language of scholarship and of faith; being willing to be unique; building a covenant community; and giving priority to mission-aligned hiring. If this list feels familiar, that is as it should be. The inaugural enacts the passing of a prophetic-mission baton from one president to another.

*As we move forward in this
great cause of becoming the
BYU of prophecy, may we
recognize the purpose for our
gathering as we work together
to build disciple leaders.*

— C. SHANE REESE



PRESIDENT AND SISTER OAKS, Elder and Sister Christofferson, Elder and Sister Rasband, Elder and Sister Gilbert, honored guests, and students and colleagues of Brigham Young University: my brothers and sisters, I am humbled and honored by the charge I have received today from the Church Board of Education. The board's invitation to become BYU's fourteenth president was overwhelming, but it has already proved to be a great blessing to our family. My primary qualifications for this sacred stewardship are a willingness to serve, an ability to work, and a desire to learn.

I love BYU and its mission. I love our students. They warm the world with their faith and brighten it with their light. I love my consecrated colleagues—faculty and staff alike—who labor tirelessly to make our inspired mission a reality for our students.

Today I honor the contributions of my thirteen predecessors, each of whom shaped and guided BYU toward its prophetic destiny. I am especially grateful for the mentoring and friendship of Kevin J Worthen, which began almost as soon as I stepped onto this campus. He is a strength and an example to all of us.

A CHRIST-CENTERED, PROPHETICALLY DIRECTED UNIVERSITY

As we begin this new chapter in the BYU story, we recognize our unique governance. As Elder Ronald A. Rasband quoted earlier from the BYU mission statement, BYU is “founded, supported, and guided by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”¹ I am awed by the guidance given to this university by latter-day prophets. At BYU we regularly invoke President Spencer W. Kimball's visionary message “The Second Century of Brigham Young University,”² which articulates a powerful road map for our future. Earlier, in a remarkable

companion message from 1967 titled “Education for Eternity,” President Kimball called BYU the greatest institution of learning in all the world.³ That is a soaring aspiration as well as a bold assertion.

More recently, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland taught that BYU will realize President Kimball’s vision

*only to the degree it embraces its uniqueness, its singularity. . . . We must have the will to be different and to stand alone, if necessary, being a university second to none in its role primarily as an undergraduate teaching institution that is unequivocally true to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.*⁴

Such commitment to Jesus Christ provides the anchor for our prophetic promise.

BECOMING BYU

Our task, I submit, is to claim in our day the prophecies of the past. Our task is to become the university that prophets have foretold—to become the world’s “greatest institution of learning”⁵ and “the fully anointed university of the Lord about which so much has been spoken in the past”⁶ and to become the BYU of prophecy and promise as boldly declared by President Dallin H. Oaks: “It is the destiny of Brigham Young University to become what those prophetic statements predicted it would become.”⁷ This great goal will not be obtained in exactly the same way that other universities have achieved their greatness. This, then, is our challenge during my administration: becoming BYU.

STRENGTHENING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Becoming BYU will require enriching the student experience and strengthening our already student-centric approach. President Worthen helped us focus resolutely on students. He championed inspiring learning both in the classroom and through internships, study abroad programs, and research with faculty mentors.

Each student's eternal progression must remain our foremost concern. To this end we strive for every student to have an inspiring learning experience. Bolstered by "gospel methodology,"⁸ we frame these experiences by our conviction that each student is a child of God who can be bound to Christ as a child of the covenant.

RETAINING A FOCUS ON UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING

Becoming BYU will also involve increased focus on our primary teaching mission. This focus has been reinforced by recent revisions to our faculty rank and status documents. As these refined incentives sharpen our focus on student learning, we will qualify for the inspiration needed to better fulfill our scholarship and mentoring missions. Our primary focus on high-quality teaching gains strength as professorial faculty collaborate with professional teaching-track faculty to enhance our students' experiences.

BYU "HAS A DOUBLE HERITAGE"

Becoming BYU will require that we embrace our religious mission even as we speak to the broader academy with credibility and strength.

President Kimball said:

The uniqueness of Brigham Young University lies in its special role—education for eternity. . . . This means concern . . . for not only the "whole man" but for the "eternal man." . . . This faculty has a double heritage—the preserving of the knowledge of men and the revealed truths sent from heaven.⁹

The faculty and staff who foster this double heritage must be bilingual: They must speak with authority about their disciplines in the language of scholarship, and they must speak with power about their Christian discipleship in the language of faith. As we strive to become the BYU of prophecy, we must develop ourselves in things both secular and sacred. When secular and sacred truths reinforce one another, we must embrace both. But when secular claims conflict

with revealed truth, we must mark the difference. As we move forward in this great cause of becoming the BYU of prophecy, may we recognize the purpose for our gathering as we work together to build disciple leaders.

HAVING THE COURAGE TO BE DIFFERENT

Becoming BYU will require at times the courage to stand alone. In this respect our strength lies in our unique role as the flagship university of the Church Educational System in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Like our colleagues at other religious institutions, we exert our strength only to the extent that we embrace and enhance our religious identity. Elder Clark G. Gilbert, commissioner of Church education, emphasized this when he said:

*Religious schools across the country enjoy a huge strategic advantage, but only if they dare to continue with and strengthen their religious identity—only if they dare to be different from their peers.*¹⁰

We must differentiate ourselves within the scope of our university work, not independent of that work. President Kimball affirmed that we must be excellent in both spheres:

*“Education for eternity” is not the kind of phrase one would expect to have carved in the stone of a new secular university; it is not the kind of commitment that would be widely shared in the retreat from real religion we see around us in the world. Yet it is a task for which we do not apologize. Those who do not share this purpose, however, will respect this faculty for its genuine achievements in the world of secular scholarship. The extra missions noted previously do not excuse you from reasonable achievement in your chosen field. You can, in fact, often be more effective in the service you render students if students see you as individuals who have blended successfully things secular and things spiritual in a way that has brought to you earned respect in both realms.*¹¹

The spiritual and the secular are not opposing spheres locked in inevitable conflict. We see them instead as “paired aspirations.”¹²

BUILDING A COVENANT COMMUNITY

Even more crucially, becoming BYU will require us to sharpen our students’ focus on their covenantal belonging, which Elder D. Todd Christofferson taught is distinctly marked by covenantal sacrifice and service to others.¹³ Belonging has to do with our own contributions: “Belonging comes from our service and the sacrifices we make for others and for the Lord.”¹⁴ By emphasizing their covenantal identity, we will naturally help our students to fix their gaze on the holy temple. For BYU to become the temple of learning foretold by prophets, we must rivet our focus on the house of the Lord. Fittingly, the Provo temple will be rebuilt and rededicated as an ultimate house of learning right when we are honoring our university sesquicentennial. As we build our university foundations on the rock of our Redeemer, and as we point our students toward the house of the Lord, we will qualify for heaven’s help. This will be part of what is “left undone”¹⁵ at other institutions of higher education. The covenants formed within the walls of the Lord’s house are central to the gospel methodology that will preserve our uniqueness.

INVESTING IN MISSION-INSPIRED SCHOLARSHIP

Becoming BYU will also require investing limited resources on strategic research initiatives. Our standard faculty contracts include some support for research, which allows faculty to pursue topics that advance their individual disciplines. Such research makes university life vibrant and refreshing as we deepen understanding of existing processes and discover new ones.

But in light of our Christ-centered mission, we should also support research that advances the Church’s purposes and blesses our Heavenly Father’s children directly. This will include strategic investments in areas in which we have natural strengths as a church and as a university, furthering recent efforts regarding the family, religion’s

role in human flourishing, and constitutional government—each of which is rooted in Church doctrine and is strategically aligned with the Church’s global mission. Anchoring our work in prophetic priorities and making our scholarly resources available to the Church will amplify our scholarship and anchor it in gospel methodology. As we embrace our unique identity and strive to become the BYU of prophecy, we will invest in other areas in which we have similar doctrinal roots and natural strengths. We have recently seen a campus-wide upswell in research focused on poverty—its assessment, causes, and remedies. Other areas of natural strength might include peace-making and education, among others. Becoming BYU will require us to strategically elevate mission-critical scholarship informed by revealed doctrine.

FOCUSING ON MISSION-ALIGNED HIRING

I repeat today what has been said by my predecessor: “The most important decisions that will be made in my tenure as president at BYU are the people we hire.”¹⁶ This starts with our faculty. Faculty hiring decisions are paramount because they strengthen the greatest resource we have. These are the people we look to for examples of mentoring: people who model the successful integration of the life of the mind and the life of faith. These are the people who the Church, the academy, and the world look to for examples of faithful disciples who combine professional excellence with deep and abiding testimonies of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. These are the people who help us to understand that the teachings and love of Jesus Christ cannot be separated from His restored Church. These are the people who anchor their lives on the teachings of prophets, seers, and revelators to help us become BYU.

As the president of BYU, I pledge my whole soul to helping us become BYU. But this personal investment will come from the entire campus community as we lean in together to recruit, hire, and develop faculty who can lead this institution to its prophetic potential.

BECOMING BYU REQUIRES INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH FROM ALL OF US

Becoming BYU will require personal introspection. Fulfilling this challenge cannot come solely from the university administration. It will require broad-based leadership from our entire campus community. It will require each of us to regularly assess our progress in becoming BYU. In that spirit, let us look at these questions:

- ♦ Is the mission of BYU changing me or am I trying to change the mission of BYU?
- ♦ What might be preventing me from not only combining meekness with academic excellence but also cultivating meekness in a way that enhances my academic contributions through greater access to inspiration and deeper engagement with “gospel methodology, concepts, and insights”?¹⁷
- ♦ Becoming BYU will require that we have the humility to ask what we need to change and the meekness to ask, “What lack I yet?”

Becoming BYU further entails renewed emphasis on long-standing objectives. For all who enter our doors, “a BYU education should be (1) spiritually strengthening, (2) intellectually enlarging, and (3) character building, leading to (4) lifelong learning and service.”¹⁸ This involves myriad experiences, from active participation in wards and stakes—where spiritual and social welfare is strengthened—to thrilling activities that build our students socially and emotionally and to engaged and energetic learning both inside and outside the classroom.

THE SECOND HALF OF THE SECOND CENTURY

This is a critical time in the history of Brigham Young University. Unfortunately we work against a societal backdrop in which discussion and dialogue are being replaced by contention and monologue. President Kimball implored us to employ gospel methodology, which

will not only distinguish us from other universities but also shape how we learn and improve as a community. As we embrace our unique institutional identity, we will foster at BYU a unique learning environment that will empower us to be peacemakers in an ever more divisive society. Understanding our primary identities as children of God, children of the covenant, and disciples of Jesus Christ¹⁹ will permit us to ask questions and seek answers in ways that view the world and our disciplines through the lens of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ rather than through our disciplinary lens, which offers a vision-limiting view of the gospel.

I know that Jesus is the Christ, that He is our Savior, and that He loves each of us completely, infinitely, and perfectly—even in our imperfections. It is through His atoning sacrifice that we can change and become more tomorrow than we are today. I know that all that is unfair in this life will be made right through His infinite Atonement. As I enter upon this new responsibility, I pray for the joy and peace that come by making and keeping sacred covenants and that come through His mercy and grace. We are blessed by prophets, seers, and revelators who lead and guide this Church and this university. The gospel has been restored on the earth today, and BYU is part of that ongoing and miraculous restoration. I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. The Mission of Brigham Young University (4 November 1981); quoted by Ronald A. Rasband, “For Such a Time as This,” address given at the inauguration of C. Shane Reese as BYU president, 19 September 2023.

2. See Spencer W. Kimball, “The Second Century of Brigham Young University,” BYU devotional address, 10 October 1975.

3. See Spencer W. Kimball, “Education for Eternity,” address to BYU faculty and staff, 12 September 1967.

4. Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Second Half of the Second Century of Brigham Young University,” BYU university conference address, 23 August 2021; emphasis in original.

5. Kimball, “Education for Eternity.”

6. Kimball, “Second Century.”

7. Dallin H. Oaks, “Challenges to the Mission of Brigham Young University,” BYU leadership conference address, 21 April 2017; quoting his own words

from “It Hasn’t Been Easy and It Won’t Get Easier,” BYU leadership conference address, 25 August 2014.

8. Kimball, “Second Century.”

9. Kimball, “Education for Eternity.”

10. Clark G. Gilbert, “Dare to Be Different: Preserving the Distinctive Light of Religious Universities,” in “Dare to be Different: The Fate of the Religious University,” special issue, *Deseret Magazine*, September 2022, 40–45, deseret.com/2022/9/14/23319209/elder-clark-gilbert-religious-universities-should-dare-to-be-different.

11. Kimball, “Education for Eternity.”

12. See James R. Rasband, “Paired Aspirations,” BYU university conference faculty session address, 28 August 2017; see also Kevin J Worthen, “BYU: A Unique Kind of Education,” BYU university conference address, 28 August 2017.

13. See D. Todd Christofferson, “The Doctrine of Belonging,” *Liahona*, November 2022.

14. Christofferson, “The Doctrine of Belonging.”

15. Kimball, “Second Century.”

16. Kevin J Worthen, quoted in C. Shane Reese, “On the Uniqueness of BYU,” BYU university conference faculty session address, 23 August 2021.

17. Kimball, “Second Century.”

18. *The Aims of a BYU Education* (1 March 1995).

19. See Russell M. Nelson, “Choices for Eternity,” worldwide devotional for young adults, 15 May 2022. See also Nelson, “Children of the Covenant,” *Ensign*, May 1995; Nelson, “Covenants,” *Ensign*, November 2011.



“Lord God of Hosts, Be with Us Yet”

D. TODD CHRISTOFFERSON

♦ *Address at the Inauguration of C. Shane Reese as
BYU President, September 19, 2023*

INTRODUCTION



D. Todd Christofferson was serving as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and a representative of the BYU Board of Trustees when he delivered this address. He spoke about the way a BYU president is chosen and how it is unique to the Church Educational System. As Elder Christofferson indicated, a small group of General Authorities, working closely with the First Presidency, identifies and carefully reviews potential candidates. Then, based on careful evaluation and acting under the inspiration of Heaven, a choice is made. The process involves both rational assessment and revelation.

It must have been gratifying to President Reese, as it was to the BYU community, when Elder Christofferson testified, “As we worked with the First Presidency in this process, I can attest that all of us felt guided to Shane Reese as the person for this moment and time. Getting to know Wendy confirmed the rightness of that feeling” (page 317).

Elder Christofferson spoke of the importance of maintaining “eternal verities” in the midst of an uncertain and disunified world (page 319). He closed his remarks with a prayer, inviting all associated with the university to remember the Savior.

*May we ever humbly recognize
our shortcomings, seek to serve
and strengthen one another,
and, in the presence of
uncertainty, consistently defer
to the will of God.*

— D. TODD CHRISTOFFERSON



PRESIDENT AND SISTER OAKS, Elder and Sister Rasband, Elder and Sister Gilbert, President Reese, Wendy, the Reese family, distinguished guests, faculty, staff, and students: I am pleased to address a few remarks to all present on this joyous occasion. I am particularly mindful of the past presidents of Brigham Young University who have joined us today, and I extend a warm and grateful welcome to each of them and to spouses who have been able to attend. It is especially gratifying to have the immediate past president of BYU, Kevin J Worthen, and our dear Peggy with us. In addition, I want to make special mention of the presidents and representatives of other universities who are here, manifesting by their presence a collegial welcome to our new BYU president. You honor us with your participation today.

May I state again my congratulations to President Reese on his ascension to the office of university president and on the eloquent and compelling response he has just delivered. For me, he has more than justified his appointment. It was my privilege, along with Elder Jeffrey R. Holland and Elder Clark G. Gilbert, to have a role in identifying candidates to replace Kevin Worthen as his term as university president drew to a close. There were some very impressive men and women who came to our attention—President Reese, of course, high among them. It was a satisfying experience to consider the qualifications and accomplishments of those candidates—most of whom did not know they were candidates. As we worked with the First Presidency in this process, I can attest that all of us felt guided to Shane Reese as the person for this moment and time. Getting to know Wendy confirmed the rightness of that feeling.

Even more important than their remarkable talents are their willing and consecrated hearts. With that, the Lord will magnify both President and Sister Reese as they measure to the substantial

expectations of this assignment. As the apostle Paul taught, “Whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”¹ In the coming months and years, all of us in the BYU community will see President Reese filled with the light, strength, and authority that will be required to lead this university into the second half of its second century.

Now, you are all aware of President Reese’s extensive background in statistics. It is said that his depth of knowledge and love for—some would say fixation on—statistics has enabled him to spark excitement for the subject even in newcomers. He calls statistics *decision-making in the presence of uncertainty*. If that is so, Shane Reese is certainly the man for the job.

I say that because of the many uncertainties of our times. There is widespread disagreement in our society about the value of long-standing institutions such as religion, marriage, family, constitutional government, and even higher education. The role of these and other institutions in modern society and the values that have long sustained them are being questioned by those who seem willing to ignore not only their spiritual significance but the considerable empirical evidence for their essential role in human flourishing.

This raises one of the central challenges of our day—what President Dallin H. Oaks has described as the need to stand for truth with love.² There is, as you know, sustained and passionate debate about political questions—and somehow everything seems to have devolved into a polarizing political question. Where will it all lead? Can a healthy pluralism be renewed and sustained?

President Russell M. Nelson’s clarion counsel on this subject could not be more instructive:

*As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are to be examples of how to interact with others—especially when we have differences of opinion. One of the easiest ways to identify a **true follower** of Jesus Christ is how compassionately that person treats other people.³*

At BYU we must stand for truth in ways that show the love and concern of a true disciple.

You who remember the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in 2001 will probably also recall the sense of unity that came to the fore in the United States in the immediate aftermath of those attacks. We witnessed renewed feelings of patriotism, fresh concern for the welfare of one another, and appreciation for first responders and all who make personal sacrifices to help others. A newfound sense that, even more than career success, what truly matters in life are close personal relationships—especially family relationships—seemed to hail a new day. Many resolved to give higher priority to these time-honored mores. But you will also recall how quickly those resolutions and that sense of unity faded. Whatever unity we are left with today seems much less than existed even before 9/11. Can mutual respect amid disagreement be re-enthroned? Can it be sustained?

Going forward, it appears we will be living in a different, more fractious world than any of us have experienced personally heretofore. The leadership of Brigham Young University, the leadership of the Church, and all of us individually will need to navigate and make decisions in the presence of uncertainty. Leaders such as Shane Reese will be needed. I don't know how often statistics will be needed or will play a helpful role in such leadership and decision-making, but I know what will. President Reese expressed it in his response just now. It is, in the midst of uncertainty, to focus on what *is* certain—to maintain the eternal verities.

Speaking of our “double heritage”⁴ at this university, President Reese stated:

*As we strive to become the BYU of prophecy, we must develop ourselves in things both secular and sacred. When secular and sacred truths reinforce one another, we must embrace both. But when secular claims conflict with revealed truth, we must mark the difference.*⁵

President Reese noted that research initiatives that advance faculty disciplines make

university life vibrant and refreshing. . . .

But in light of our Christ-centered mission, we should also support research that advances the Church's purposes and blesses our Heavenly Father's children directly. This will include strategic investments in areas in which we have natural strengths as a church and as a university, furthering recent efforts regarding the family, religion's role in human flourishing, and constitutional government—each of which is rooted in Church doctrine and is strategically aligned with the Church's global mission. . . . As we embrace our unique identity and strive to become the BYU of prophecy, we will invest in other areas in which we have similar doctrinal roots and natural strengths. We have recently seen a campus-wide upswell in research focused on poverty—its assessment, causes, and remedies.⁶

President Reese concluded:

As we embrace our unique institutional identity, we will foster at BYU a unique learning environment that will empower us to be peacemakers in an ever more divisive society. Understanding our primary identities as children of God, children of the covenant, and disciples of Jesus Christ will permit us to ask questions and seek answers in ways that view the world and our disciplines through the lens of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ rather than through our disciplinary lens, which offers a vision-limiting view of the gospel.⁷

The truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ—which indeed embrace all truth—are the underpinnings and the lodestar of this singular university. While less appreciated—and even opposed in some quarters—these truths and principles take root here and bear beautiful fruit in the lives of students and faculty alike. May we ever humbly recognize our shortcomings, seek to serve and strengthen one another, and, in the presence of uncertainty, consistently defer to the will of God.

I am reminded of Rudyard Kipling's poem titled "Recessional," composed in 1897 in connection with the celebrations marking the sixtieth anniversary of Queen Victoria's accession to the British throne. Part of it is included in our hymnal under the title "God of Our Fathers, Known of Old." I quote two verses:

*The tumult and the shouting dies;
The Captains and the Kings depart:
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!*

*Far-called, our navies melt away;
On dune and headland sinks the fire:
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!⁸*

Dear God in heaven, I pray as this new president and new administration take the reins at Brigham Young University that they and we and all connected to this unique institution may renew our commitment to Thee and in all the years ahead never forget the singularity of our mission and the source of our strength. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Romans 8:30.
2. See Dallin H. Oaks and Kristen M. Oaks, “Stand for Truth,” worldwide devotional for young adults, 21 May 2023.
3. Russell M. Nelson, “Peacemakers Needed,” *Liahona*, May 2023; emphasis in original.
4. Spencer W. Kimball, “The Second Century of Brigham Young University,” BYU devotional address, 10 October 1975.
5. C. Shane Reese, “Becoming BYU: An Inaugural Response,” address given at his inauguration as BYU president, 19 September 2023.
6. Reese, “Becoming BYU.”
7. Reese, “Becoming BYU”; see Russell M. Nelson, “Choices for Eternity,” worldwide devotional for young adults, 15 May 2022. See also Nelson, “Children of the Covenant,” *Ensign*, May 1995; Nelson, “Covenants,” *Ensign*, November 2011.
8. Rudyard Kipling, “Recessional” (1897); see also “God of Our Fathers, Known of Old,” *Hymns*, 2002, 80.

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- PAGE XVI. BYU Music Building: Bradley Slade/BYU, 2023.
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- PAGES 3, 167, 265, 285. Dallin H. Oaks: Leslie Nilsson/The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2018.
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- PAGES 185, 217, 299. Kevin J Worthen: Mark A. Philbrick/BYU, 2014.

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