"That All May Be Edified of All"

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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 a 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." 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" ("A House of Faith," BYU annual university conference address, 31 August 1977; see also *Educating Zion*, eds. John W. Welch and Don E. Norton (Provo: BYU Studies, 1996), 115). 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 LDS tradition. They are part of a "unified work," as President Oaks said ("House of Faith"). 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;*
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> *Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space.* [D&C 88:11–12]

The purpose of the School of the Prophets was to prepare the first Church leaders for their ministries. Historically, the school lasted

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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," "teach ye diligently," "seek learning, even by study and also by faith," "clothe yourselves with the bond of charity," and so forth have never been rescinded (D&C 88:68, 78, 118, 125). Nor has the Lord's curriculum. He expects His people to be instructed "in theory, in principle," "of things both in heaven and in the earth," obtaining "a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms" and "the best books" as well as "languages, tongues, and people" and the "laws of God and man" (D&C 88:78–79, 118; 90:15; 93:53). 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" (D&C 88:122) 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 up-building, 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" (D&C 88:79). 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 (see D&C 88:80).

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. [*HC* 3:295]

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" (Isaiah 5:20). 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 (see 1 Peter 3:15). 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" (Fyodor Dostoyevsky, written in his last notebook [1880–1881]; see *Literaturnoe Nasledstvo* [Moscow: Nauka, 1971], 83:696]). In either case, an edifying education fits us for hosanna shouts.

All of all: The principle that *all* are to learn *of all* is rich with implications for BYU. I've explored some of these with you in past conferences. Likewise, Jeffrey Keith has highlighted today how this philosophy informs new interactive pedagogical tools. It also applies to nontechnological, active learning strategies we discussed last year in which students learn from each other.

This same principle of "all edifying all" is congruent with our ongoing assessment efforts, which have required us to think of ourselves as part of an ensemble rather than as soloists, to borrow Dean Rosenberg's metaphor. Assessment has made us more intentional about whether and how our programs are educating students in the ways we say they will. Jeff Keith, however, tells me that not all programs have closed the assessment loop, to use the common jargon. You can see how close we are to having all programs close the loop on a pie chart he has prepared. Not all programs even have learning outcomes. This is unacceptable. In the future, the University Curriculum Council will not accept program modifications unless they are tied to learning outcomes.

Many programs are also developing what might be termed "scholarship outcomes" to guide annual stewardship evaluations and rank and status reviews. Faculty have come together to agree on disciplinary norms for assessing scholarly and creative productivity. I commend this. This is another way that all are edifying all. I hope that by clarifying standards, we can lift up (i.e., edify) the quality of our scholarship in each discipline and thereby have a greater impact on our students and the world.

Perhaps, however, it is in mentoring that we have seen the most dramatic results from applying the pedagogy of all edifying all. We are continuing to see impressive results as faculty engage students, including undergraduate students, in substantive scholarly and creative work. I wish I had time to share with you some of the reports I receive about the results of mentoring. In spite of the freeze and efforts to trim back elsewhere, we are committed to continued funding for mentored student learning. This investment in student learning pays great dividends in their development.

Undergraduate Education is also 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. [*Reflections on the Psalms*, a Harvest Book (New York: Harcourt, 1958), 1]

Freshman peer mentors will not replace TAs 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 (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). I know from personal experience about the importance of good siblings. I have 12 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 BYA (see "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).

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.

So the concept of peer mentoring has long, deep roots at BYU. Nevertheless, as a new program for us, I expect some bumps as it is rolled out. I am cautiously hopeful about its ultimate success, mainly because it is based on principles consistent with our scriptural constitution.

"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" (D&C 88:138).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. [Remarks of Zebedee Coltrin on Kirtland, Ohio, history of the Church, Salt Lake School of the Prophets, 1883 Minute Book, 3 October 1883, 38]

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" (Spencer W. Kimball, "The Second Century of Brigham Young University," BYU devotional, 10 October 1975). 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" (Education in Zion exhibit text [http://lib.byu.edu/sites/educationinzion/files/2010/05/Education-in-Zion-Text.pdf]; see D&C 88:121). As William Blake recognized, virtue resides in "minute particulars." "He who would do good to another must do it in minute particulars" (*Jerusalem* [c. 1818–1820], chapter 3, plate 55, line 60). It is in the minutia of our lives, in our quotidian conduct as Christians, that we qualify for the companionship of the Spirit, without which we cannot teach (see D&C 42:14).

"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. As the last of the 10, 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" (D&C 121:39)—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. [D&C 88:123]

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" (D&C 88:122). 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* (Russell Hoban [New York: Harper and Row, 1976]) 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. 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-15 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" (Romans 12:15). 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" (*De Cive* [1642], preface). 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" (letter from Joseph Smith to William W. Phelps, 14 January 1833; *HC* 1:316). 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. [D&C 88:133]

We do not now so greet each other here at BYU, of course, nor do I expect this practice to be reinstituted 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. And, as C. S. Lewis reminded us, "It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses" (*The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* [New York: Macmillan, 1949], 14–15).

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 says of friends, you multiply my joys and divide my griefs (see "Of Friendship," *Essays* [1625]). I have felt particularly grateful for you during the past couple of years as we have all coped with the hiring freeze. I have felt in you a spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood as we have met the challenge together. I have seen you put the needs of others first, especially students, as you have tried to accommodate shortages in faculty and staff. I have seen you express a deeper sense of appreciation for the staff as we have had to go without their help. I appreciate your patience through it all, including your patience with me.

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.