

In This Time of Complexity and Challenge

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Now, ladies and gentlemen, brothers and sisters, may I in conclusion use only very briefly the prerogative extended to me in order to thank this very able administration and this dedicated and talented faculty for their service to us all and to you graduates and to wish you as graduates Godspeed.

These graduates now leave one of the few remaining universities that still has religion at its core. Once, among universities, it was otherwise.

Graduates, you enter a secularized society in which, alas, more and more individuals live without God in the world—a condition, say the prophets, that is contrary to the nature of true happiness. Be aware, therefore, of the secularized state that professes love of men but rejects God. For, as Dostoyevsky said, this “leads to the greatest coercion over men, and turns their lives completely into hell on earth.”¹ No wonder, therefore, that for those who live without God in the world, life is, in the words of Saint Teresa of Avila, “no more than a night in a second-class hotel.”²

For you graduates, however, life can be a first-class experience, and no greater compliment can be paid to you than to remind you that an all-wise God has placed you here and now in this time of complexity and challenge. He did not bring you thus far to fail. You can be equal to your time and to your tasks, and yours is a very special time, for the Savior has told us that just as when the fig tree puts

forth its leaves we may “know that summer is nigh,”³ so it will be with His Second Coming. The foreseen summer of circumstances is now upon us. Let us therefore not complain of the heat.

May God bless you and stretch you and sustain you and all of us, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, as interpreted by Malcolm Muggeridge, “The Humane Holocaust,” *Human Life Review* 23, no. 1 (winter 1997): 106; see pages 342–45 of “Conversations and Exhortations of Father Zossima,” book VI, chapter 3, in Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. Constance Garnett (New York: Macmillan, 1922); see also “Grand Inquisitor,” book V, chapter 5, in *The Brothers Karamazov*, 259–79.

2. Saint Teresa of Avila, as interpreted by Malcolm Muggeridge, “The Great Liberal Death Wish,” *Imprimis* 8, no. 5 (May 1979): 6, Hillsdale College, Michigan, imprimis.hillsdale.edu/the-great-liberal-death-wish; see Saint Teresa of Avila, *The Way of Perfection* (1566), chapter 40.

3. Matthew 24:32.

Neal A. Maxwell was a member of the Presidency of the Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when this BYU commencement address was delivered on 21 April 1980.