

Simple Truths

JOSEPH R. NANCE

Fellow graduates, when I moved into my dorm room in Helaman Halls in the fall of 2003, I had no idea what I was getting myself into. I certainly never dreamed I would be standing here in a blue, dress-like outfit, in a square hat, doing *this*. I thought, like most of my friends, that I was just coming to college. I would be here for a few years, get my degree, go somewhere else, and move on. I've gotten the degree, and I'm going somewhere else, but I will never be able to just move on—none of us will. We can't just move on, because BYU has changed us; it has become a part of us, and we are connected for good to this university.

This enduring connection to BYU is shared by hundreds of thousands of successful BYU alumni who have preceded us in all fields of work, service, or advanced study—and we have a responsibility to live up to their reputation. We *will* live up to it, because we have been well prepared.

Our preparation began the moment we arrived on campus. We arrived from all over the world; in fact, we are perhaps the most diverse graduating class in BYU history. In our pre-BYU lives we had many distinct experiences. As diverse as our experiences may have been, however, we were united by at least one commonality when we arrived on this

campus: we were full of questions—questions we started asking ourselves the moment we passed the sign that declares “Enter to Learn.”

Ironically, it was the issue of learning that was the genesis of most of our uncertainty when we first arrived, and the prominent letters that mark the entrance of campus seemed to prompt our initial questions: What am I going to major in? Am I going to be successful? What or where is the SWKT?

Four years later (give or take) and we've all finally decided on a major and HBLL, the Wilk, and SWKT roll off our tongues as if by second nature.

During these four years in academia we have learned that knowledge is often born of questioning that which is given to us as truth. And so, naturally, besides answering many of the questions we came with, we leave with others. Our parting questions resemble those that we had when we arrived: What am I going to do with that major? And, once again: Am I going to be successful?

Joseph R. Nance spoke as the representative of his graduating class at BYU commencement on 23 April 2009.

The unique and magnificent thing about a BYU education is that in addition to being taught truths that we are meant to question, we are also taught far more important truths that we need not doubt. These truths are simple: God loves us, He sent His Son to save us, and He wants all of His children to be happy. These truths answer the deepest desires of our souls.

To be successful, or to be of worth, is one of the deep desires that unite us as we leave BYU. Fortunately the unquestionable truths of God teach us how to attain true success—no matter our major. He has taught us about true success through the life of His Son, who found His life by losing it—figuratively and very literally—in the service of others (see Matthew 16:25).

Surely we have all realized the importance of service while here at BYU. I have had the opportunity to learn from some amazing examples. As president of the Student Alumni Association, I have personally seen thousands of fellow students donate hundreds of thousands of pounds of food and tens of thousands of dollars to the needy in our community. I have also witnessed hundreds of alumni return often to their alma mater to help students net-

work and prepare for life after BYU. Students and alumni alike have given not so much out of a desire for attention but because they understand the importance of service. Such service blesses the lives of those who selflessly give.

When we have served, we have discovered an extra measure of strength and have witnessed our own problems shrink in size and in complexity. I know that just as our university experience was not complete without finding ways to lose ourselves in the service of others, our lives will remain unfulfilled if we keep to ourselves and do not give to the world of what BYU has given us.

And so, just as the sign leading into campus, “Enter to Learn,” prompted so many questions in our young and eager minds, the rest of the sign, “Go Forth to Serve,” answers the questions of our still young and eager souls. It is only by learning and living this final lesson that we can honor this university and the name of Him who directs it.

May we all go forth then with a knowledge of how vital service will be to our future success.