

# *Lifelong Learning and Continuous Service*

TERRY R. SEAMONS

As I look over this sea of blue, I see thousands who have taken the challenge that is sculpted near the entrance to BYU: “Enter to Learn; Go Forth to Serve.” Congratulations. You are now a graduate of one of the greatest universities in the world.

One of my privileges as alumni president is to officially welcome you into the BYU Alumni Association. I hereby confer upon each of you lifetime membership in the Brigham Young University Alumni Association. We welcome you to this great association of more than 400,000 alumni.

As you go forth to serve, I invite you to stay connected to BYU through the BYU Alumni Association. We have more than eighty-five alumni groups, called chapters, located across the country in which you can associate with fellow friends and alums of BYU. Through these chapters you can not only watch a game or see a university touring group together but also mentor students and contribute to replenishment grants that help students who live in your region to graduate.

In fact, just as King Benjamin counseled, I hope you will make service a yardstick to measure every aspect of your postgraduate life (see Mosiah 2).

One of my favorite stories that illustrates the depth of true service is in a book called *The Giving Tree*, by Shel Silverstein (New York: Harper and Row, 1964).

The story describes the relationship that develops over time between a boy and an apple tree. When he was a child, the boy would climb, swing, eat apples, and gather leaves, which made both the boy and the tree very happy.

As the boy grew and his needs changed, the tree offered its service in different ways: its apples for selling, its branches for building a home, and even its trunk for carving a canoe so the boy could sail away.

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*Terry R. Seamons was president of the BYU Alumni Association when this commencement address was given on 14 August 2014.*

The last time the boy—as an elderly man—visited the tree, all that remained was a stump. As the tree apologized for having nothing left to offer, the man said that all he needed was a place to sit. The tree then straightened itself up to allow the elderly man a chance to rest—and at that moment both were happy.

The great outcomes of a BYU education are founded in lifelong learning and continuous service. As you give heed to the charge in Silverstein’s simple story, you will be amazed at how much good you can accomplish.

As you scatter to all corners of the world this week, I hope you will remember your alma mater. Continue your love and support. Stay connected with us and let us know about your successes so we can celebrate with you. We want to stay connected with you throughout your lives—connected for good.

We know that you will have many priorities competing for your time. Your family, your community, the Church, and your employer will all need you. Remember, those who follow you here at BYU also need you.

As President Worthen has said:

*There is a divine destiny at this school, . . . and it [plays] out largely in the lives of our graduates and the influence that they have. . . . To be part of an organization that has that kind of impact—an eternal impact on people’s lives—it’s a tremendous experience. [Quoted in Peter B. Gardner, “Meet the Worthens,” *BYU Magazine*, summer 2014, 47]*

He is talking about you, my friends. You have a real opportunity “to assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life” (*The Mission of Brigham Young University and The Aims of a BYU Education* [Provo: BYU, 2014], 1).

Go forth and prosper, both spiritually and professionally. We applaud you and will always hold you close to our hearts.

I bear testimony that this is the Lord’s Church, that the Lord leads and guides us today, and that this institution was divinely established and is divinely led. And I bear you that testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.