

“I Say unto You, Be One”

BOYD K. PACKER

As a mission president, I taught the missionaries to ask a few questions about the town in which they were to labor. Where did the town get its name? When was it settled and why? “Then,” I told them, “you will know more about the town than even those who have lived there all of their lives.” Most people do not know the very simple and, oft-times, fascinating things about the community in which they live.

You come to Brigham Young University from all over the world. It is my purpose to tell you things about this great community of learning that you do not know. I will tell you things about the past: why it is unique and why and how this university was founded; something about the present: how it is governed; and something of the future: what we must do if we are to keep faith with those who founded it. Most of what I tell you, you will not find written in books.

Church Education in the Early Years

From the beginning, the Church has fostered both spiritual and secular learning, for that is in the revelations. The Lord revealed that “the glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth. Light and truth

forsake that evil one. [Ye are commanded] to bring up your children in light and truth” (D&C 93:36–37, 40). Another revelation tells us that “whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection” (D&C 130:18). There are other scriptures that emphasize the importance of both religious and secular learning. One of them includes a promise:

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.
[D&C 88:78]

As the early Saints moved to Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois, they established elementary and secondary schools in each settlement. Schools of the Prophets were organized for adult leaders in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1833, and

Boyd K. Packer was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when this devotional address was given at Brigham Young University on 12 February 1991.

other such schools were organized even after the settlement here in the West. I know they had a School of the Prophets in Brigham City, for instance. In 1840, a university was established in Nauvoo.

During the trek to the Rocky Mountains, elementary classes were conducted in the camps. In the fall of 1847, within three months of arriving in the valley, the first schools were organized. Three years later the University of Deseret was founded; it later became the University of Utah. The deeding of this university to the state foreshadowed a policy to turn Church-related schools to the civil government as soon as public schools were available to our members.

Beginning in 1875, the Church established academies in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. They were to provide secondary secular and religious education. By 1907, the Church was operating thirty-five academies. The academies included elements of what we now have in junior colleges. For example, President Harold B. Lee graduated from the Oneida Stake Academy in Idaho and was appointed principal of an elementary school. He was eighteen years old at the time. President Benson graduated from that same academy.

With the establishment of free public high schools, attendance at the academies declined. Some were closed; others became Church-sponsored junior colleges. By 1931, only Juarez Academy in Mexico remained. In time, except for Ricks College, the junior colleges were all transferred to the states. Weber State University began as the Weber Academy. President David O. McKay was principal at the time of his call to the Twelve. Brigham Young Academy became Brigham Young University.

Incidentally, there was a Brigham Young College established in 1877 in Logan. It was replaced by a land-grant college, now Utah State University.

And in 1891 the Church announced the establishment of the Young University in Salt Lake City headed by Dr. James E. Talmage. Buildings were under construction and equipment had been purchased when the Panic of 1893 occurred. Church leaders set aside those plans in favor of supporting the University of Utah, which was sinking under the depression, and Dr. Talmage was appointed president of that university (John R. Talmage, *The Talmage Story* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1972], pp. 119–23).

When they moved from academies to public secondary schools, our youth missed religious instruction. In 1912, the Church opened the first released-time seminary adjacent to Granite High School in Salt Lake City. The following year Able S. Rich, who was a teacher in agriculture at the time, was hired to open the second seminary in Brigham City. Brother Rich was still there as principal when I began to teach there forty years ago.

Institutes of religion were established at public colleges beginning in 1926 at the University of Idaho. I have known personally most of those who pioneered religious education in the Church.

There is another chapter. In fairly recent times, elementary and secondary schools were established many places in the world where schools were not available to our members. When public education became available, more than a hundred schools—including a university, junior colleges, academies, secondary and elementary schools—were transferred to state governments or were closed.

In order to coordinate the programs and growth of Church schools, a General Church Board of Education was organized in 1888, consisting of selected local Church leaders—stake presidents, for instance. Karl G. Maeser was named the first superintendent of Church schools, a position that later became the commissioner of Church education.

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” (D&C 107:27, 29). 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, has 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.
[D&C 88:122]

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” (D&C 38:27). 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.
[D&C 82:9–10]

And, I repeat, “I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27).

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.

It may be of interest to you to review some of the career or secular qualifications of those who presently preside over the Church schools and over this university. Since I have gone to some length to explain how we work as a body—as one—I will present something of a composite résumé of the career or secular experience of the trustees of Brigham Young University. While we do not consider such qualifications to be indispensable, some others evidently do.

Since this is a community of learning, I will list first the academic degrees held by members of the board. Five of the twelve trustees have earned doctor's degrees. One of the five holds both a doctor of medicine degree from the University of Utah and a Ph.D. degree in surgery and physiology from Minnesota. The other doctorates are in law, business administration, and education. The universities represented are Harvard, Chicago, Southwestern, and Brigham Young.

Four other board members hold master's degrees in agriculture, business, political science, and one in curriculum design (held by one of the women on the board). The schools represented are Iowa State, the University of Utah, and Brigham Young.

All but one of the others hold either a bachelor of arts or a bachelor of science degree. That one is a homemaker, having devoted herself to helping her husband through medical school and to her family. She brings a dimension to our board that is consummately precious—a perspective that is valued above degrees. This great woman presides over the largest women's organization in the world with a membership of more than 2.75 million women.

As for scholarship, it ranges from average to Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Kappa Phi. Several degrees were bestowed cum laude (with

honor). There is magna cum laude, summa cum laude, and, as with me and you, if by chance you graduate, "Thank you, Laude."

As for *experience* in education, one board member served as executive vice president of the University of Utah; another was professor and acting dean of the School of Law at the University of Chicago and was president of Brigham Young University. Another was associate professor of the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University, visiting professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and president of Ricks College. Another is an honorary professor at three universities in Shandong and Shanxi provinces in China and visiting professor at other universities in China as well as at universities in Mexico, Chile, and Uruguay.

Two have served as Church commissioner of education and one as assistant administrator of seminaries and institutes and on the administrative council at BYU. Four have served on the board of regents that governs all public colleges and universities in the state.

As for honorary doctorates, I count thirty-three, and I may have missed one or two. It is a little hard to find out. They were bestowed by public and private universities across the nation in humanities, letters, law, science, medical science, public service, and other fields.

Board members have received honors, awards, fellows, and distinguished alumni from universities, prestigious societies, professional and scholastic organizations. There are honorary citizen and other awards from community, state, and national governments, including one from the government of Argentina. It would take pages even to list them.

Board members have given public service to community, state, and nation. The chairman of the board of trustees served for eight years in the president's cabinet. Several have served on select or advisory committees to the White House and to departments of the federal gov-

ernment. One was chairman of the board of the Public Broadcasting System. Some members have served in state senates, one as a justice on the state supreme court, others on city councils. The list of service on governors' select committees; committees for constitution revision, for selection of judges and other public servants; commissions; boards; advisory committees; foundations; trusts; and other community, state, and regional organizations is far too long to list here.

And, of current interest and importance, there is one other category of experience of members of your board of trustees: that is service in the military. Included on this list is a marine corporal, a combat infantry staff sergeant, an army medical officer and an army artillery officer, a field officer and bomber pilot in the air force, and two who served in the navy. President Benson was in the ROTC at Utah State when World War I ended.

In our free enterprise system, board members have been both employer and employed and have been owners, chairmen, directors, officers, and managers of corporations and have owned and do own stock in business and industry, as all citizens have a right to do. For instance, at the time of his call to the Twelve, one member of the board was serving on twenty-six corporate boards. Some are a little puzzled that such service has continued after their call, thinking it a little too worldly for Church leaders. But such service contributes valuable experience and serves other very important interests of the Church. We are caught between those who think we are not in touch with the world and those who think our keeping in touch with it is somehow wrong. Keep in mind the system of lay clergy the Lord established. We are commanded to remain *in* the world but not to be *of* the world.

At present, 1,711 institutes of religion enroll members in sixty-two countries, and there are seminaries in ninety countries. In addition, we operate twenty-six elementary, middle, or

secondary schools about the world. During just the last one year, members of the board have traveled in forty-six countries. Many of the countries have seen more than one board member. Besides the main countries you might expect on the list are Swaziland, Lesotho, the Soviet Union, Estonia, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, the People's Republic of China, and many others.

We do not go as tourists. We meet with church, educational, community, and government leaders and, of far more importance, we meet with the rank and file of the people. We gain a knowledge of "things which are abroad; the wars and perplexities of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms" (D&C 88:79). There is not a body of twelve people anywhere on this earth who travel as broadly and as constantly as members of this board of trustees. Should a problem arise virtually anywhere on earth, one of us has been there recently.

Members of the board hold in common their ordinary beginnings. They came from homes, as you did, where their parents sent them away to school, often at great sacrifice, with encouragement to apply themselves so that they could be of service one day to their families, the community, and the Church. One became an agricultural agent, another a secretary, one a printer, two became lawyers, one a lumberman, another a hardware merchant, three became teachers, one a surgeon, one an accountant, and one a homemaker.

Were I to add the education, travel, and career qualifications of the other six members of the Twelve who do not presently serve on the board of trustees, it would increase this report proportionally.

Now, all of these things are *never, absolutely never, talked of or even mentioned in our circles*. In thirty years, I have never heard one conversation on all of that which I have just reviewed for you. I risk being scolded for even mention-

ing them here. I know that most of you, too, do not consider these secular or career achievements as being overruling in their consequence, but there are those who do. They feel we may not understand the mysteries of the world of academia and therefore are not fully qualified to set policy, standards, and direction for a university. For them, perhaps these things needed to be said.

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. [“The Death of Religious Higher Education,” *First Things*, January 1991, p. 8]*

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 of both 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 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” (Minutes of the Church Board of Education, 7 June 1990).

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 (Minutes of Executive Committee, 27 April 1982).

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” (D&C 93:2). 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.
[D&C 88:15; emphasis added]

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. [D&C 93:33–34, 36, 40; emphasis added]

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.”

To you students, I quote a revelation to you 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” (D&C 88:118).

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.