

## “Anxiously Engaged in a Good Cause”

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**I**n section 58 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord tells us that it should not be necessary for him to “command in all things.” He then said:

*Men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness;*

*For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. [D&C 58:26–28]*

As dean of Admissions and Records, I am deeply committed to this principle. I feel a sacred trust and responsibility for encouraging and admitting students to BYU who will not only be serious about their education but will also best use their education and talents to build and serve the kingdom of God. As students you have the sacred obligation to develop your talents for service, and as you use your talents for the kingdom, the Lord will open doors of opportunity, not only while you are here but after you graduate.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained in his book *The Promised Messiah*:

*There are two laws—the law of Christ and the law of Moses. The one is the gospel, the other is the preparatory gospel. There are two sets of command-*

*ments—the commandments which assure a celestial inheritance, and the law of carnal commandments, which, standing alone, carry no such assurance of eternal reward. The one is for those who are “anxiously engaged in a good cause,” who “do many things of their own free will,” who use their agency to “bring to pass much righteousness”; the other is for those who are slothful and rebellious by nature, who need to be commanded in all things, who neglect good works unless they are compelled to perform them. (D&C 58:26–27.) [Bruce R.*

*McConkie, The Promised Messiah (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1978), p. 408]*

Similarly Elder Dallin H. Oaks explained that “service is an imperative for true followers of Jesus Christ” (*Pure in Heart* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], p. 37). He emphasized, “Whether our service is to God or to our fellowmen, it is the same” and quoted King Benjamin’s testimony: “When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17). Elder Oaks carefully pointed out:

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*When we think of service, we usually think of the acts of our hands. But . . . the Lord looks to our hearts as well as our hands. He is concerned not only with our acts but also with our motives. . . .*

*In order to purify our service to God and to our fellowmen, it is therefore important to consider not only how we serve, but also why we serve. [Pure in Heart, p. 38; emphasis in original]*

President Ezra Taft Benson provided this insight:

*Usually the Lord gives us the overall objectives to be accomplished and some guidelines to follow, but he expects us to work out most of the details and methods. The methods and procedures are usually developed through study and prayer and by living so that we can obtain and follow the promptings of the Spirit. Less spiritually advanced people, such as those in the days of Moses, had to be commanded in many things. Today those spiritually alert look at the objectives, check the guidelines laid down by the Lord and his prophets, and then prayerfully act—without having to be commanded “in all things.” . . .*

*Sometimes the Lord hopefully waits on his children to act on their own, and when they do not, they lose the greater prize, and the Lord will either drop the entire matter and let them suffer the consequences or else he will have to spell it out in greater detail. Usually, I fear, the more he has to spell it out, the smaller is our reward. [CR, April 1965, pp. 121–22]*

Over the years Church and BYU leaders have clearly envisioned the mission of BYU and the hopes that they have for BYU graduates. One such statement—and one of my favorites—is by President Spencer W. Kimball. He said:

*There are many ways in which BYU can tower above other universities . . . because of the unique light BYU can send forth into the educational world. Your light must have a special glow. . . . You will also do some special things. . . .*

*I am both hopeful and expectant that out of this university . . . there will rise brilliant stars in drama, literature, music, sculpture, painting, science, and in all the scholarly graces. This university can be the refining host for many such individuals who will touch men and women the world over long after they have left this campus. [Spencer W. Kimball, “Second Century Address and Dedication of Carillon Tower and Bells,” Brigham Young University, 10 October 1975, pp. 1, 4]*

In 1988, during an executive committee meeting of the board, President Hinckley said:

*The mission of BYU is to produce men and women who will make a significant contribution to society and in the process render faithful service to the Church and also be a strong influence for the Church in the world. [Ford Stevenson, personal file note]*

In considering a request for increased scholarship funds at BYU, President Hinckley asked if a study had been conducted to measure the level of leadership and Church activity for BYU scholarship students after they left BYU. President Hinckley then stated that if he knew our students were remaining faithful in the Church after leaving BYU and giving significant service and leadership to the Church and community, he would be happy to increase our scholarship budget. (And I might insert that he did.)

In 1990 Elder Boyd K. Packer explained:

*Literally thousands of [students] dream of enrolling at BYU. . . .*

*. . . The enrollment at this university . . . cannot grow as the Church grows. . . . [In fact, during the past decade the number of LDS 18-year-olds has nearly doubled whereas the enrollment ceiling at Brigham Young University has remained virtually the same.] The growth of the Church cannot be held back. . . .*

*. . . We have no choice but to make some adjustments to accommodate the growth of the Church. . . . Entrance requirements cannot be based on grades alone. Church schools are not solely for the academically gifted.* [Boyd K. Packer, "The Edge of the Light," BYU fireside address of 4 March 1990, adapted in *BYU Today* 45, no. 2 (March 1991): 38–39]

That same year, 1990, I was appointed dean of Admissions and Records, and we were given a charge by the board of trustees to expand the criteria by which students are admitted to BYU. As we prayerfully considered guiding principles for an expanded admission criteria, we frequently referred to President Hinckley's comment that "BYU is to produce men and women who will make a significant contribution to society and in the process render faithful service to the Church and also be a strong influence for the Church in the world" (see "The Mission of Brigham Young University," approved by the BYU Board of Trustees on November 4, 1981). We decided that an applicant's service and leadership in community, high school, and Church should be part of the expanded criteria for admission to BYU. We also believed that just as high school grades are the best single predictor of how students will perform academically in the university, a student's record of leadership and service during the high school years would also be the best single predictor for a student's future contribution.

In 1991 the undergraduate admissions application was expanded to collect this information, and the Admissions Committee has since considered service and leadership in screening those who are admitted to BYU. You may be interested in knowing that approximately 25 percent of the students admitted to the freshman class through the Admissions Committee's reading of their files would not have been admitted if only grades and test scores were used in the selection process.

You would be impressed if you could see each applicant's admission file. Your commitment to service and leadership shines. You are an extraordinary group of students. I am convinced that, regardless of what we provide educationally, this institution will continue to grow in prestige because of the quality of the students attending and graduating from here.

Attendance at BYU is truly a sacred privilege, not only when you consider how few LDS students can attend BYU but how BYU is financed. As many of you may know, 70 percent of the cost of your education comes through the tithes of the LDS Church membership. Therefore, whether a student has a scholarship or not, the financial support by the Church is significant. The gift from, or, better stated, the financial investment in you by the Church assumes an obligation on the part of each student to fulfill the purposes for which this university is chartered.

Two and a half years ago Professor Paul Cox, then dean of General Education and Honors, made the following statement to honor students:

*BYU students who see their scholarships [and I might insert admissions] as gifts rather than as entitlements will use their time at BYU to prepare for future service in the kingdom of God. They will keep themselves pure and unspotted so that they can enter the temple and become parents of an eternal family unit. They will diligently study the scriptures and prepare themselves to teach superbly in their homes and in the auxiliaries of the Church. They will seek to hone their musical, accounting, and administrative talents to assist the Church wherever they live. They will learn to live close to the Spirit so they will be able to identify and reach out to those who are in need. Such students will be particularly cognizant of Church members in distant lands who support BYU through tithes and offerings but who cannot enroll here. They will, where appropriate, seek to study other languages and cultures so as to better prepare themselves for service in a worldwide Church.* [Paul Alan Cox,

“Your Scholarship: Gift or Entitlement?”  
10 October 1995, p. 8]

Last year, as part of the selection process, the university’s Presidential Scholarship Committee decided to ask finalists to submit a proposal addressing how they would use their gifts and talents to benefit others. The purpose was to encourage them, at the outset of their university experience, to begin thinking about how they might contribute to the university, the Church, or society at large.

A wide variety of intriguing proposals was submitted. One was to establish an organization within Provo and Orem that would assist the many different service agencies in coordinating efforts. Another was to implement a program in hospitals using therapeutic music to increase the survival rate of critically ill newborns. Most important, these students entered BYU this past fall realizing that not only would they receive a quality education and experience here, but they would also be expected to make significant contributions beyond their academic activities in the classroom.

There have always been high expectations for the students attending BYU and for the contributions they would make in the world and to the Church. On September 18, 1962, President Ernest L. Wilkinson addressed the BYU faculty and used an example of one of BYU’s earliest students. He said:

*One of the most thrilling examples of the type of student produced at the “Y,” through our secular and spiritual environment, is that of a young English immigrant who first enrolled at Brigham Young Academy in 1876. Two years later, at the age of sixteen, he graduated and immediately joined the faculty as an instructor in elementary science, Latin, and English.*

*With the friendly encouragement of Dr. Karl G. Maeser and President John Taylor, the young Englishman journeyed back East and engaged in further study at Lehigh University and Johns*

*Hopkins University. Thus, he was among the very first LDS students to obtain advanced training at eastern universities. Returning to the “Y,” the young scholar was appointed as professor of geology and chemistry. Later he became assistant to Brother Maeser. While serving in this capacity, he was appointed to the school’s board of trustees. Having tremendous civic vigor, he also served as Provo City councilman, alderman, and justice of the peace.*

*Later, this English scholar was called to the position of president of the Latter-day Saints College in Salt Lake City. And five years later, he became president and professor of geology at the University of Utah. In 1911 he was called to the Council of the Twelve, and Dr. James E. Talmage served in this office with great ability and inspiration until his death in 1933, at the early age of seventy-one. . . .*

*I am convinced that Elder Talmage’s life and his outstanding accomplishments were influenced to a marked degree by his experiences at the “Y” and by the counsel and encouragement he received from Dr. Karl G. Maeser. In this respect, I sincerely exhort each of you to remember that there may be many other “James Talmages” in our student body. [Ernest L. Wilkinson, “The Calling of BYU,” in *Educating Zion* (Provo: BYU Studies, 1996), pp. 38–39]*

Although there may be few who meet the full merit of being a James E. Talmage, BYU has an illustrious list of graduates who have made and are making “significant contribution[s] to society and in the process render[ing] faithful service to the Church and also [are] a strong influence for the Church in the world.” Let me cite a few recent examples.

There is an international student on our campus who chooses to do many things of her own free will. I am sure that she is like many of you. Because of her own financial struggles, she is sensitive to the needs of others. As she has met other students who are struggling to make ends meet, she has taken it upon herself to help by directing these students to offices on

campus that may have the resources to help. She has also found financial sponsors for some and in some cases has raised money herself to give to those who are in desperate straits.

A former BYU student, like many of our alumni, freely gives of his skills and talents. Upon leaving BYU he studied medicine and eventually became a plastic surgeon. He now has his own practice. Each year he and others who work with him go to South America at their own expense and provide needed plastic surgery to children whose bodies and faces are grossly disfigured. He brings hope and healing to those who could never afford such procedures.

Recently I learned that one of my former BYU classmates has adopted over the years the practice of giving 10 percent of his professional time in service to others without a charge, just as he gives a tithing on his income. As a student at BYU he constantly gave service to the student body in student government, service organizations, and the Church. This has continued through his life, and he has served on the BYU Alumni Board and as Alumni president. During this time he has also served as a bishop twice and is currently a stake president.

Recognition should also be given to the wonderful contributions being given by full-time homemakers. Every year as we participate in the scholarship selection process, so many students, when asked what made the difference in their lives, respond that it was their parents—specifically their mothers. They tell of mothers with great talents and skills who could have had distinguished professional careers but remained in the home to nurture and teach their children. I am convinced that these good women saw their opportunity to “bring to pass much righteousness” by raising a righteous posterity to the Lord.

We are all recipients of gifts from the Lord that can be used to build the kingdom and make this world a better place to live. The Lord reinforced this wonderful principle to the

Prophet Joseph Smith in D&C 46:11: “To every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God.”

President Spencer W. Kimball said, “God has endowed us with talents and time, with latent abilities and with opportunities to use and develop them in his service. He therefore expects much of us, his privileged children” (*The Miracle of Forgiveness* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], p. 100). To be at BYU is to be a “privileged child.” It is important that you seize every opportunity, develop your talents, and prepare for service. Then, as you become “anxiously engaged in good causes,” you will bring “to pass much righteousness,” and the Lord will open doors for you to make your own personal contributions.

Today, special circumstances allow me to introduce you to a wonderful woman, who, like all of us, has been blessed with gifts and talents from the Lord. She has not had the privilege of attending BYU, but she personifies what we are about. She has spent a lifetime “anxiously engaged” in good causes and has brought forth “much righteousness.” In addition to being an exemplary member missionary in Norway, her initiatives led to the establishment of the Norwegian and Danish lecture series here in our David M. Kennedy Center. She joined the Church in 1964 when my father was mission president in Norway. She is seated in the audience today. [May I ask Sister Rigmor Heistø to please stand. Thank you.]

Sister Heistø is 78 years old, and she came from Norway two weeks ago to hear Norwegian Supreme Court Justice Georg Fr. Rieber-Mohn give a lecture in the Kennedy Center. She is the person who made the original contact with Justice Rieber-Mohn and put me in touch with him.

Two years ago Sister Heistø read a newspaper article in which Justice Rieber-Mohn, then attorney general for Norway, lamented about the disintegrating family and cultural values in Norway. In the newspaper interview he warned that the continued pursuit of

materialism could destroy the country, and he called for a greater emphasis on teaching values.

Sister Heistø thought the attorney general should know that a church was already doing the very things he advocated. So she wrote to him, told him about our church, and sent him some brochures. A week later the attorney general telephoned, thanked Sister Heistø for writing to him, and invited her to meet with him. As a result, she had a two-hour meeting with the attorney general in which she explained the Church's teachings and programs.

At the conclusion of their visit, Sister Heistø suggested that the attorney general visit Utah to learn more about the Mormons personally. She then said she had a friend at BYU who would be happy to invite him to visit Utah and give a lecture at BYU. I was contacted, I extended the invitation, and we had the privilege of hosting Justice Rieber-Mohn and his son just two weeks ago.

It was a wonderful visit, and Justice Rieber-Mohn gave an excellent lecture in the David M. Kennedy Center. He discussed his observations overseeing criminal prosecution in Norway for the past 11 years and placed the primary blame for increased crime on the breaking down of the family and the pursuit of materialism. In a radio interview in Salt Lake City discussing his observations, the interviewer asked if Justice Rieber-Mohn had gained any insight during his visit to Utah that he might take back to Norway to help resolve the problems he had identified. His response was, "Well, I should take the whole Mormon Church with me and the family life you have, and we would see a rapid decline in all the negative signs developing of which I have spoken" (transcription of radio interview provided by Dave Porter, LDS Public Affairs, 5 March 1998). Here is a man who prior to meeting Sister Heistø admitted that the only thing he knew about Mormons was what he learned in high school regarding polygamy—and now he is a good friend to the Church and BYU.

The visit by the Norwegian Supreme Court justice is just one of the most recent examples of Sister Heistø's contributions. To conserve time, may I summarize just what she has done since she retired 11 years ago:

1. She earned a theology degree at Norway's most prestigious theological seminary.
2. She initiated contacts with some of Norway's most noted educational and political leaders, many of whom have come to BYU to give lectures.
3. She has worked with the Norwegian Ministry of Education in developing a comparative religion course being taught in Norwegian high schools.
4. She organized, edited, and published a book on comparative religions that is now being used as a text in Norwegian public high schools and is the first comparative religion text book where each religion was permitted to write its text for itself.
5. She got the video of *The God Makers* removed from all Christian bookstores in Norway.
6. She has proposed legislation to protect religions from having inaccurate information printed about them.
7. She has presented a display on our Church each year at the annual Norwegian Teachers Conference.
8. She has helped hundreds of non-LDS Norwegian high school students research and write accurate term papers about our Church.

As noted, Sister Heistø decided to obtain a theology degree. Her family and friends had told her that if she'd had any intelligence she could have seen through the lies of Mormonism. She felt that by attending a Norwegian Lutheran theological seminary and obtaining a theological degree she could show her intelligence and counter the criticisms by family and friends for joining the LDS Church.

One of her first classes was Philosophy of Religions, taught by Professor Guttorm Fløistad. At the end of the course, Professor

Fløistad asked for suggestions on how he might improve the course for future offerings. Sister Heistø raised her hand and suggested he add a section on the philosophy of Mormonism. Professor Fløistad responded that he didn't know enough about Mormonism. Sister Heistø quickly suggested that she could arrange for a Latter-day Saint scholar from Brigham Young University to come to Norway and give a lecture at Oslo University on Mormonism. Then Professor Fløistad could use the BYU professor's lecture material for his course. Professor Fløistad was agreeable to her suggestion, although it may have been a polite way to close the discussion. However, Sister Heistø, with her strong determination, followed through and arranged for Professor Truman Madsen from BYU to go to Norway. Professor Madsen gave a superb lecture, and Professor Madsen and Professor Fløistad became close friends.

When I went to Norway as mission president, Sister Heistø approached me about having Professor Fløistad visit BYU and lecture at the Kennedy Center. I made contact with the university for an invitation and made arrangements with a donor to pay for his expenses. It was a marvelous experience that resulted in Professor Fløistad becoming one of the Church's best public relations friends in Norway.

One interesting side note about Professor Fløistad's visit that shows Sister Heistø's fortitude when representing the Lord was the commitment she extracted from Professor Fløistad before coming to BYU. The European area presidency visited Oslo and gave a seminar on member missionary work. At the end of the seminar, Elder Carlos Asay, then the European area president, asked the members to make a commitment to give at least three referrals a month to the full-time missionaries. That gave Sister Heistø an idea.

The next day Sister Heistø telephoned Professor Fløistad and said, "Since we are paying for you to go to Utah to learn about the Mormons, I think we should get something in

return." He responded that her request seemed fair and asked what she had in mind. She then suggested that he invite at least three people a month to learn more about the Mormons. He agreed to the request.

Professor Fløistad had taken a year's sabbatical from Oslo University to study leadership and management in Norwegian businesses. Arrangements had been made for him to tour Norway giving lectures on his findings. The day he returned from Utah he began a week's tour in Norway visiting major cities and lecturing to Norway's leading business executives. At the end of the week, when he returned to Oslo, Professor Fløistad telephoned Sister Heistø to give a report on his visit to Utah and to thank her for arranging the trip.

Professor Fløistad then asked Sister Heistø if she remembered the commitment she had extracted from him. She said yes, and he then asked her what it was. She replied that he was to invite at least three people a month to learn more about the Mormons.

He said, "I've done better than that. I gave six lectures this week to business executives, and I have invited each of them to learn about your church." He then added, "Do you want to know what I said?"

"Of course!" she replied.

He continued, "I told them that I have found the most perfect organization, and it is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." He then added, "Even if you are not interested in religion, the next time two Mormon missionaries knock on your door, let them in. There is much you can learn from the Mormons."

A week later Professor Fløistad telephoned again. He said, "Rigmor, I understand Mormons like reports." She confirmed that we do, and he said, "I've called to give you another report. This week I gave five more lectures, and again I invited my audiences to learn more about the Mormons."

It didn't stop there. Professor Fløistad has returned to BYU three times. And now, 10 years later, he tells me that he still gives about 400 lectures a year, and in at least one out of three lectures he talks about what his audience can learn from the Mormons.

As a result of Sister Heistø's initial efforts, the groundwork was laid for the establishment of the Scandinavian Scholarship Endowment at BYU. This was made possible through the generous contribution of a private donor who was aware of Sister Heistø's work and applied his own gifts and talents to help this work go forward. In conjunction with the scholarship program, a special lecture series in the David M. Kennedy Center was established to bring Norwegian and Danish government and educational leaders to Utah and Brigham Young University.

The lecture series was initiated by writing to the Norwegian ambassador to the United States. I told him of the scholarship program and of our objective in bringing Norwegian government and educational leaders to lecture at BYU. Within a few weeks the ambassador replied, complimenting us on our initiatives and inviting me to visit him at his embassy the next time I was in Washington, D.C. Fortunately, a month later I went to Washington on some university business and met with Kjeld Vibe, the Norwegian ambassador. We had a delightful visit, and he graciously accepted the invitation to visit Utah and lecture at BYU.

About two weeks later Stephen Studdert, a stake president in northern Virginia and a former member of President Reagan's administration, stopped by my office. During our discussion I told him about my visit with the Norwegian ambassador. President Studdert smiled and said, "How would you like a postscript to your visit?" He then told me that two nights earlier he had attended a dinner with 18 ambassadors in Washington, D.C. None of the ambassadors knew he was LDS nor had an association with BYU. As the evening began,

the Austrian ambassador told the other ambassadors that he had just returned from a visit to Brigham Young University. The ambassador said it was one of the most delightful experiences of his life. He told of his impressions of BYU, of how kindly he was hosted, and of how impressed he was with BYU and its students. President Studdert said as soon as the Austrian ambassador finished, another ambassador said that he, too, had visited BYU. He gave a similar report. When he finished speaking, the Norwegian ambassador then stated, "I just accepted an invitation to go to BYU and will be there next month." After Ambassador Vibe's comment, President Studdert said a fourth ambassador asked, "How do you get invited? I would like to go there, too."

President Studdert moved to Utah and was asked by Governor Michael Leavitt to serve as chair of the 1996 Utah Statehood Centennial Celebration Commission. One of President Studdert's proposals for the Statehood Centennial Celebration was to have an ambassadorial-visits program to showcase Utah to foreign ambassadors. I was invited to serve on the program committee and later became its chair.

Our target was to bring 50 ambassadors to Utah representing countries that were Utah's strongest economic trading partners. Each ambassador could come at a time convenient to his own schedule. Forty-three ambassadors came. One of the objectives during the visits was to have each ambassador speak at a college or university. Most ambassadors wanted to visit BYU, and the highest percentage did. It was a marvelous experience to host them and see their reactions. Because of the success of the state's program, we have now started our own BYU Ambassador Lecture Series and bring ambassadors each semester to visit BYU and lecture at the Kennedy Center. Tomorrow the Czech Republic ambassador will be on campus and lecture in the Kennedy Center conference room at 12:00 noon—and on Thursday the



ambassador from Spain will be on campus and lecture in the Kennedy Center conference room at 11:00 a.m. May I encourage you to attend their lectures.

Shortly after hosting the Norwegian ambassador, we hosted the ambassador from Denmark—Peter Dyvig—and his wife. They, too, were extremely impressed with BYU, the students who attended the ambassador’s lecture, and the quality of the questions asked in the question-and-answer session. Afterward the ambassador’s wife commented, “Peter, look into the eyes of these students. There is something different . . . from students we have seen on other campuses.” The ambassador agreed. Most dignitaries I host make the same comment about you. Your very appearance makes a statement to our non-LDS guests.

In the fall of 1992 we hosted the Danish minister of education, Bertel Haarder. He had just come from a seminar in Denmark, where he had gathered 100 of the leading Danish educators to discuss the future of Danish education. In preparation for the seminar, he sent a copy of Allan Bloom’s book *The Closing of the American Mind* to each participant. He asked the seminar participants to read the book and come prepared with ideas how they and the Danish Ministry of Education could avoid the problems that had developed in American education.

Minister Haarder was therefore very interested after holding the seminar to come to the United States and visit our university. Minister Haarder and his wife spent two days on our campus. He gave a lecture at the Kennedy Center and met with the university president, faculty, and students. Although the Haarders were very impressed with BYU, they were even more impressed with the quality of the LDS students and their willingness to interrupt their university studies for missionary service.

When we took the Haarders to the Salt Lake Airport on a Wednesday, it was very busy, even though it was 8:15 in the morning.

Minister Haarder was curious why the airport was so congested at that early hour. I told him it was because missionaries were departing for their assignments, and their families were seeing them off. He asked how I could tell. I smiled and pointed out the new suits, white shirts, and missionary badges.

He asked, “Where are they going?”

I said, “Throughout the world.”

As we walked down the concourse, we approached a missionary who was saying good-bye to his family. I suggested to Minister Haarder that we ask him where he was going. I interrupted the family conversation long enough to ask, “Elder, where are you going?”

The missionary politely answered, “North Dakota, sir.”

I then introduced the missionary and his parents to Minister Haarder. Minister Haarder asked the missionary how he felt about serving a mission. The missionary responded that he was excited, but he would miss his family.

Minister Haarder commented, “Well, you will be able to come home for vacations and holidays, won’t you?”

The missionary responded, “No, sir. When I go, I am there for two years and won’t see my family until the end of those two years.”

Minister Haarder then turned to the parents and asked, “How do you feel about that?”

The mother replied, “We will miss him, but we are very proud of him. This was his decision.”

We concluded the conversation and again proceeded toward his departure gate. However, before getting there, we visited with other missionaries: one going to South Carolina, a second going to Moscow, and a third going to St. Petersburg. In each case Minister Haarder asked the missionary several questions regarding his desire to serve a mission, how he felt about interrupting his education, and what he hoped to accomplish during his mission. Minister Haarder was overwhelmed by the answers he received.

The airline was giving the final boarding notice as we came to the departure gate. However, I took time to ask, “Minister Haarder, you just came from a seminar where you read and discussed *The Closing of the American Mind*. That book suggests that American education is in an intellectual crisis. It portrays youth as self-centered, lacking commitment, having no direction in their lives, and having little identity with their culture and religion.” I continued, “How do you compare that image of American education and American students to what you have seen at BYU and the missionaries you have just met?”

He paused and thoughtfully answered, “What I have observed is the antithesis of what was portrayed of American education and youth. I am very impressed with your university and your students. Both are uniquely different.”

As a result of his visit to BYU and Utah, Bertel Haarder has become a friend of the university and the Church. The Copenhagen stake president shared the following account with me that demonstrates the impact these visits are having for the Church. One day not long after the minister’s return to Denmark, he heard a radio call-in show that focused on the Mormons. One caller made some critical

comments about the Church. Other callers followed with equally disparaging comments. Then a caller came on the line and said, “This is Bertel Haarder.” Most Danes knew who Bertel Haarder was because he had been minister of education for 10 years. He then continued, “When I was a young man I probably had the same impression of the Mormon Church. But recently my wife and I visited Utah and saw the Mormons up close. What you are saying is incorrect, and I suggest you discontinue this discussion.” The radio station not only discontinued the topic, but they closed the program and played music for the balance of the program time.

As I consider the past several years and see the amount of good that has come from the visits of these dignitaries, my mind continually goes back to Sister Heistø. So much of this is a direct result of her desire to be “engaged in a good cause.” There are many others like her who in their own private way make a difference. And those differences can be made in so many ways.

May I challenge you to be “anxiously engaged” in good causes, and you, too, can make a difference and “bring to pass much righteousness.” To that end I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.