

What We Are and What We Can Become: A President's Perspective

REX E. LEE

I express personal appreciation to each of you for your presence here this morning. In many ways, this is our most important meeting of the year, and it is almost certainly the most important talk that I give. It is my one opportunity to share with our entire university professional family—staff, faculty, and administrators—my thoughts about the kind of university we are and ought to be, what we have done, and how we can do it better. I have been disappointed—even frustrated—over the fact that it is literally impossible to have continuing interaction with the some 4,400 people who carry out the day-to-day tasks necessary to the fulfillment of our educational mission. I found those relationships both pleasing and valuable when I worked with smaller groups of colleagues at the Law School or in government. I wish I could have closer and more frequent contacts with all who make up our BYU family. But these annual conferences provide us at least one opportunity—the best one I have each year—to visit with all of you.

Because of the frequent inquiries I receive, I want to give you a report concerning my health. In a sentence, I feel as optimistic about both the near term and also the long term as I have at any time in the last three and a half years. I have appreciated your concerns and your prayers in my behalf, and those prayers

have had their intended effect. The cause of my absence from graduation in April was a series of blood clots that had broken loose and lodged in my lung. Those pulmonary embolisms, as they are called, can be life threatening, but because of the equipment that was installed in my body, I am probably a lesser blood-clot risk than most people seated in this audience. The other potentially life-threatening condition of which you are all aware is the cancer that I have had for several years and will have as long as I live. I can summarize that one best by saying that my cancer is probably better under control than at any time since we first discovered its existence. I have not been taking any medication for 15 months. During my most recent visit to my principal oncologist in July, the word that he used to describe his reaction was “ecstatic.”

My other health concern is the one that poses no threat either to my life nor to any cognitive or other ability relevant to the performance of my presidential duties, but has affected me in some less important, though aggravating ways. It is a damage to the

Rex E. Lee was president of Brigham Young University when this address was delivered at the Wednesday morning session of the BYU Annual University Conference on 25 August 1993.

peripheral nerves in my legs and arms, and is therefore called peripheral neuropathy. The principal symptom, and one that you have probably noted, is that I have to walk with some deliberateness. My marathoning days are a thing of the past—and just at the time when I was considering challenging Ed Eyestone and training for the Olympics.

An Associated Press story of about two months ago, reporting that this neuropathy affected my cranial and central nervous system, is 180 degrees wrong. The cranial and central nervous systems are completely separate from the peripheral system and are therefore unaffected. As my neurologist told me, “The good news is there are no peripheral nerves in the brain.” Any cerebral deficiencies that you note, therefore, are attributable to something other than the ailment that has ended my career as a long-distance runner.

The year 1992–93 had several highlights of historic proportion, including the adoption by our board of trustees, following months of faculty discussion, of several organic documents recommended by faculty committees that clarify and make explicit understandings that underlie our relationships with our university and our sponsoring Church. I am confident that we will benefit from the good-faith administration of these documents’ governing principles, including jurisdictional distinctions that are now in place marking the boundaries between, on the one hand, matters appropriate for ecclesiastical attention and, on the other, those that should be handled through academic channels. The year has also seen some other important milestones. I will mention just three: (1) the completion of our new art museum, which will be a cultural gemstone not only for our university, but also for a much broader community. It will be dedicated this fall in time for its first exhibit consisting of the Vatican’s Etruscan collection. (I find it deliciously ironic that the Vatican collection will be on display in our art museum at the very

moment that, less than a half mile away, we are playing Notre Dame); (2) the board of trustees’ approval of our testing the feasibility of a capital campaign that, if ultimately approved, would be the largest such campaign in our history; and (3) the beginnings of a major initiative that will enable our students to shorten their time to graduation—an initiative that I will discuss more fully later.

Visions And Aspirations

One of my most important opportunities at these annual university conferences is to share with you my vision of Brigham Young University, what we are, what we can become, and what we ought to be doing to take us there. Toward that end, I offer the following three thoughts:

1. First and foremost, we are committed to the ideal of the Church university—a place that combines faith in God with the pursuit of the highest in academic achievement. Those two, faith and academic achievement, are integral, inseparable parts of a single whole. Our integration of the two constitutes our unique contribution to the restored kingdom, and also our unique contribution to American higher education.

The theme of this fall conference, taken from section 11 of the Doctrine and Covenants, is instructive in this regard: “I will impart unto you of my *Spirit*, which shall enlighten your *mind*” (verse 13; emphasis added). The spirit and the mind: The two go together, inextricably linked, as confirmed by scripture and by more than a century of experience at this university.

I recognize that the almost universal experience of religious universities has been that, over time, they will abandon their spiritual component and concentrate solely on the academic. This reality serves only to strengthen our resolve that the same will not happen here.

The two structural protections that will best preserve our capacity to maintain our uniqueness in this respect are (a) a board of trustees

composed of principally prophets, seers, and revelators and (b) a faculty composed dominantly of deeply committed members of the LDS Church. Our non-LDS faculty members add richness to our program and greater appreciation of its very uniqueness. We are grateful that they are our colleagues. But the overwhelming majority of our faculty always have been, are now, and always will be drawn from persons of unshakable faith in the reality of the Restoration and a desire and commitment to integrate that faith into our total university learning experience.

These two structural mainstays—a board of trustees composed principally of prophets, seers, and revelators, and a faculty composed principally of believing, practicing, devoted Church members—are key not only to our uniqueness, but also to our capacity to make unique contributions to the restored kingdom and to higher education. Departing from either of them would be the greatest mistake we could possibly make, and is something we will never do.

From time to time we hear statements to the effect, “BYU is going to have to decide what it really wants to be, a university or a seminary.” Such a statement is borderline nonsense. The implication is that we must choose between the life of the mind and the life of the spirit, between faith and intellect, between what we can reason out for ourselves and what the Holy Ghost assures us is true.

That suggested dichotomy is not only a false one, but its underlying premise would deprive us of our uniqueness and our great strength. Our business is the business of learning. To paraphrase our commissioner, we have found a better way to do it, because of the companion processes by which learning can occur. And learning occurs most effectively when, to use Elder Maxwell’s phrase, the scholarship of the spirit and the scholarship of the mind operate in tandem. It follows that when we emphasize the importance of solid, mainstream scholar-

ship, both as a means of improving our teaching and also for other purposes, or when we stress the importance of building testimonies as part of our classroom efforts, neither should be taken as a signal that the other is unimportant, because for us, the mind and the spirit are integral, inseparable parts of a single whole, mutually supportive and indeed synergistic. It is wrong, therefore, to think that an emphasis on one de-emphasizes the other. They are part of the same reservoir, and adding more water raises the level of the entire lake, regardless of whether it enters from the north shore or the south shore. BYU is and will remain firmly committed to excellence in both scholarship and faith. We will neither offer, nor will we accept, trade-offs or apologies.

Over the past year, and particularly over this summer, there have been several comments about diversity at BYU. Beyond question, our diversity is not the same as other people’s diversity. I am grateful to John Tanner for his insights concerning the relevance to our university of the phrase that appears on the great seal of the United States, and also on some of our coins, *E Pluribus Unum*. Literally, it means “out of the many, one.” In several ways, that phrase describes us well. It is, if you will, the coin of our BYU realm. We are many, and yet out of our pluralness we are one in important respects, some of which are unique to us. We are one in the same sense that the Savior urged his disciples to be one on the eve of his crucifixion. We are one in our devotion to the Restoration and its positive effects on individual lives and to the need to understand and incorporate its principles as part of our total learning experience. Corollaries necessarily include acceptance of the importance of prophets, prophetic statements, and priesthood authority and a recognition that these have been restored. Beyond those common, shared, and accepted values, we are many and we are diverse: in our views about politics and government; in our academic and other

professional backgrounds, training, and interests; in the ways we set about to achieve our shared views; and indeed in every way except those that tie back to restored truth. Viewed from the broader perspective of American higher education as a whole, the very fact that we are different from other schools in our common acceptance of religious values makes an important and unique contribution to the entirety of America's colleges and universities. And precisely because we are part of it, American higher education is more diverse. Ultimately, the cause of diversity is scarcely served by insisting that our diversity be the same as everyone else's diversity.

2. The fact that we are not just another university, but a unique one that focuses on the integration of the sacred and the secular, must always support and enhance our seriousness about academic excellence, reflected both in our teaching and also in our scholarship. Just as faith and study are, for us, inseparably linked, there is a similar tie between teaching and scholarship or creative work. The fact that we are very serious about the quality of our teaching and scholarship, and the interrelationships between the two, is reflected, among other things, by our new rank and promotion document and the work of our Faculty Council on Rank and Status. The charge given to us by President Kimball some 17 years ago to become an "educational Mount Everest" is our standard. It is a challenging and useful metaphor. An educational Mount Everest: It means that we must not simply set our sights high, but the highest. We must be not merely good, but the very best of which we are capable: the best scholars, the best teachers, the best citizens, and the best integrators of spiritual and intellectual scholarship.

Over the 21 years since I came to BYU as a full-time faculty member in 1972, we have made remarkable progress in scaling the heights implied by President Kimball's metaphor. Clearly we are not there yet. Our

continuing progress as an institution consists of the combined efforts of each of us, and I am disappointed when I see evidence of effort that falls short of the capability of any individual or department or college. This is neither the place nor the time for anyone to put his or her productivity transmission into neutral and be content to coast or to attempt to read into anything that has been said or done by our board or our administration as any kind of a retreat from the standard stated by our beloved 12th prophet of this dispensation—to be not just good, but the best.

3. We are an integral part of our sponsoring Church, and our very reason for being is that as a high-quality university we can contribute to the building of the kingdom in ways that no other entity within the Church can do quite as well as we do. The most prominent example is our training of members and future leaders of the Church in an atmosphere of demanding academic requirements and great faith. But there are also more specific examples. Today I will mention just one, our opportunity to be part of the increasing internationalization of the Church. To date I believe we have only begun to scratch the surface of our opportunities in this respect. Examples of these opportunities abound. They include (a) merging the experience of our returned missionaries with our university language expertise, (b) training future missionaries and mission leaders, (c) developing the potential for Church leadership by having students from around the world obtain part of their education here and then return to their native countries, and (d) advancing the great variety of special projects that can best be provided by a university and that would be useful to the Church and useful to countries in which the Church is present.

Our opportunities to make a contribution beyond the shores of the United States and Canada constitute one of our great built-in comparative advantages. To date we have only begun to avail ourselves of that advantage.

An important challenge is that many of our efforts in this respect will require significant additional funding. One of the seven priorities identified in our capital campaign is the furtherance of BYU's international mission. Should the board of trustees during the coming year authorize our proceeding with that campaign, which to date they have authorized us only to test, our ability to do more in capitalizing on a significant comparative advantage should be aided. But regardless of what happens with the capital campaign, we should pursue our international opportunities.

Academic Freedom

I said last year that members of our faculty enjoy a greater measure of academic freedom than they would at any other university. Because of several comments that have been made since that time, I would like to explain, briefly, why that is true.

It is important to note that the statement is necessarily built on the unassailable premise that people who come here do so conscious of our devotion to integrating our various academic disciplines with the principles of restored truth. For some people the opportunity to work, teach, research, and publish in that kind of environment is a positive attraction; for others it is not. For the great majority of us who are in fact here—indeed, theoretically for all—it is a plus. Otherwise, we would not have come.

Building on that premise, let me give you four hypothetical cases that bear out my conclusion that BYU faculty members enjoy a greater measure of academic freedom here than they would at any other university.

Hypothetical Case #1. Professor Sandra Day Justice teaches constitutional law. She wants to incorporate into both her scholarly work and also her teaching her belief that the United States Constitution did not come into existence by pure chance—that God himself played a deliberate role in its establishment. This con-

viction is rooted in modern-day scripture, in which she believes. Both in her scholarly work and in her teaching, she wants to explore some of the objective indicia, scriptural and non-scriptural, that she believes support this view of divine constitutional origins and also some of its theoretical and practical consequences.

Hypothetical Case #2. Professor Zoe Ology's teaching and research specialty is human anatomy. She is convinced that the human body is a divine creation and that many of its functions and characteristics can be better understood and appreciated once one accepts that premise. Indeed, without that premise there are some human physical characteristics that cannot be explained. She wants to build both her scholarship and also her teaching on the foundation of that belief.

Hypothetical Case #3. Professor Cy Cology came to BYU with an already established reputation as one of the nation's finest social scientists. While here he developed and published concerning the effect that spirituality and communication with God have on human conduct. His thesis is that human behavior cannot be fully understood unless this spiritual component is taken into account. His work has resulted in several prominent national awards. He wants to be free to continue to incorporate this thesis into his teaching, his research, his publications, and his discussions with colleagues.

Hypothetical Case #4. Professor Skelly Skeptic is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He has reached the conclusion that the Book of Mormon is one of the most remarkable pieces of literature written in the 19th century, but that it is nothing more than remarkable literature. He is so convinced of the correctness of his position that he feels compelled so to instruct his students and to build his scholarly efforts around it.

Now, who has academic freedom and who does not? Two points to note. First, at least so far as the classroom is concerned, if the

professor in either of the first two hypothetical cases were to teach what they want to teach at a state university, they would be in violation of federal and state law, including constitutional law. And even at private institutions all of the first three hypothetical professors would find the total academic environment ranging from hostility to ridicule to effective prohibition. Indeed, the third of our hypothetical professors has expressed the view that at any place other than BYU, he would have found it difficult, if not impossible, to pursue the work that has been so widely recognized by professional societies and others. As BYU professors, however, all three would be understood and encouraged, and if they do it well, according to our demanding standards, their work products, both in and out of the classroom, will be rewarded.

Our fourth hypothetical professor, by contrast, would not be allowed to pursue his interest as a BYU faculty member, and if he did so would be asked to leave.

Quite obviously, given their interests, the first three enjoy more academic freedom at BYU than at any other university. And their assumed interests are not unusual for our faculty. Across virtually all departments, examples can be found of people who want to explore, either through their teaching or their scholarship or both, the intersections and interrelationships that exist between their faith and their discipline. Here we are free to do that. Elsewhere we would not be. To be sure, the fourth hypothetical teacher-scholar is less free to pursue his interests here than he would be at any other institution. But there is a far greater likelihood that people who come here in the first place will bring with them interests more similar to the first three hypothetical cases than to the fourth.

And that brings me to my second point concerning academic freedom, as illustrated by these four hypothetical cases. The view held by our fourth example—the one who wants

to teach and publish his view that the Book of Mormon is nothing more than 19th-century literature—can be developed virtually anywhere except at an institution sponsored by the LDS Church. For him, other universities provide an alternative forum where his view can be offered in the marketplace of ideas. Not so with the other three. BYU, with its two campuses, is the only university where they would be truly free to pursue their academic interest. Absent at BYU, there is no comparable forum for them. And this necessarily means that they would be less free.

I read with interest a recent letter to the *Daily Universe* editor from an English professor at Fort Hays State University in Kansas. She writes:

As a Mormon, I find it frustrating that I am unable to incorporate overtly the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ into literature and discussions within my classroom. My personal political stance, as well, must be kept confined to outside interest and involvement, and I have absolutely no doubt that if I were to place myself in a position of opposition to the environment in which I am employed, I would be terminated forthwith.

I suppose the grass truly does always seem greener on the other side of the hill. From where I stand, it's pretty green at BYU. [August 11, 1993, p. 4]

An important element of our freedom as academics is the opportunity for candid discussion among ourselves. I have appreciated and learned from such discussions with you over the past year, some of them one-on-one and others in small or not-so-small groups. Almost without exception, these opportunities have helped to shape my thinking, and in some instances have effected changes not only in how I think, but also in what I advocate with others.

I will mention just one example. We need to be sensitive in our dealings with each other.

Racially based or gender-based slurs, harassment, or discrimination of any kind are practices for whose eradication we must constantly and diligently strive. In our attitudes, in our speech, and in our conduct—whether related to hiring and promotion or the way we treat each other in and out of the classroom or the common courtesies required by decency, civility, and common sense—our efforts must be unflagging. The second great commandment, I submit, requires nothing less. I would hope that our Faculty Center—which has been so effective in so many respects—can help in this effort. Our Human Resources and academic vice presidents' offices can also play significant roles. But ultimately the responsibility is an individual one and must be individually assumed and addressed.

I would hope that our efforts would extend not only to ourselves and our colleagues but to our students as well. It is, I submit, part of their education and ours to learn to view all people—regardless of such invidious and irrelevant categorizations as race and sex—as our brothers and sisters. My experience teaches that the underlying stereotypes, ranging all the way from jokes to conduct, do not die easily. But I invite each of you to join with me in diligent effort to secure their demise.

It is not the place of any of us to question the decision of any other among us to enter the workforce. Those decisions are very personal, and the relevant considerations and circumstances will necessarily differ, often substantially, from person to person. Our responsibility, therefore, is to assume that once the decision has been made, it has taken into account all relevant considerations, including advice from the Brethren, and is not ours to second-guess.

Improving our Graduation Time

I am excited about the coming school year and would like to discuss with you next our efforts to shorten our matriculation time lead-

ing to graduation. I consider it our number one priority—at least for the coming year, and perhaps beyond. If our efforts are successful, the rewards will include the improved quality of our total undergraduate program; significant financial and other benefits to our students as we move up the time they enter their chosen professions and settle into permanent, lifetime circumstances; and an increase in the number of students who can profit from a BYU education without changing our 27,000-student enrollment limit. I can think of no other initiative that, if successful, can do quite as much good for as many people, all of whom are very important to us.

To date we have identified slightly over a dozen ideas and specific proposals for change. A few of them focus on changes in what our students do, but the substantial majority must be implemented by us, because most of the impediments to timely graduation are of our making, and not of our students'.

I will not at this time detail all of our proposals and ideas, but let me briefly review some of the most prominent:

1. An associate degree from a feeder school with whom we have a consortium agreement will satisfy lower-division general education requirements, with the exception of the math/language and advanced writing composition requirements. We have now had enough experience with this issue that we believe we can achieve our quality objectives by carefully working out the consortium agreements. This reform is already in place at Ricks College and will be soon in other two-year colleges.

2. Mandatory advisement concerning graduation, including the filing of graduation plans, will be required at several key points for all students—particularly for students with excessive hours or students not making satisfactory progress toward graduation in either general education or major requirements.

3. The curriculum committee and our new dean of General and Honors Education

will be reexamining our general education requirements.

4. We need to increase the sections offered in bottleneck courses—especially during the spring and summer terms. Advanced composition and freshman English are examples, but there are others.

5. We are asking every academic program to limit its major requirement to 60 hours or bear the heavy burden of showing that there is a compelling reason for an exception. We will not discourage—indeed we will applaud—reductions in those that presently require fewer than 60 hours, so long as those reductions can be accomplished consistent with maintaining quality. We fully realize these decisions will be painful and difficult, and in those instances where a truly compelling case can be made for major requirements in excess of 60 hours, some exceptions may be allowed. And in some of those cases (of which I anticipate there will be few), we will have to give serious consideration to designating them officially as five-year programs and get us out of the business of fraud. But I repeat: Our objective is not to create more five-year programs, nor to find exceptions. Accordingly, the case to be made for majors that continue to require in excess of 60 hours will have to be truly compelling.

We must not, and will not, sacrifice legitimate quality considerations on the altar of efficiency. We are not trying to create a cheaper degree—only a more efficient one that will better serve the interests of our students and the university. I hope we will not make automatic assumptions that requirements now in place necessarily have quality implications simply because they are now in place. Indeed, the major requirements in many of our strongest departments are far short of the 60-hour benchmark.

There is a general growing national awareness that length of time in school is not synonymous with high quality. Among the criteria taken into account by those who rank universi-

ties are the length of time required to graduate and the percentage of entering students who ultimately obtain degrees. Both of those will be affected by our total hourly requirements. Some of the schools whose graduation times are the shortest are those frequently regarded as among the best. Indeed, Gerhard Casper, the new president of Stanford, has even gone so far as to call for consideration of a possible three-year baccalaureate program. We do not anticipate going that far; for the near term, I would like to shorten the distance between what we call a four-year degree and the six years it takes to get that degree. Martin Kramer, editor in chief of *New Directions for Higher Education*, is very blunt on this issue. He says, “Lengthening of time-to-degree is, in short, an indicator of unresponsiveness as well as inefficiency.”

The principal beneficiaries of this reform will be our students, both those we now serve and the increased numbers we will be able to serve. Mr. Kramer further observes that “the opportunity costs of going to college are increased alarmingly by a lengthening of time-to-degree” because of the reduced earning capacity for every year that entry into the adult labor market is postponed and because of reduction in the number of years of peak earnings later in life. I also believe that the quality of our students’ experience during their four undergraduate years will be enhanced because of increased opportunity to take courses outside their major. Regrettably, in some majors we have virtually eliminated any meaningful opportunity for our students to take elective courses.

Necessarily unacceptable will be the simple assertion that our course requirements must expand because the body of available knowledge has also expanded. I use as my example in this respect the study of constitutional law. Over the 30 years since I graduated from law school, the United States Supreme Court’s activity in deciding constitutional cases has greatly exceeded that of any comparable

preceding period in its history. As a consequence, the presently existing body of constitutional law is at least 10 times as large as when I was in law school; yet our law schools very properly devote about the same number of teaching hours to that subject today as they did 30 years ago. Most of you are aware of comparable circumstances in your own fields. If we simply expanded what we teach commensurate with our expanded body of knowledge, in some disciplines people would never graduate.

Please do not put off, even until next month, the examination of your major requirements under the guidelines outlined. It would be very easy for every department to assume that critical examination of major hour requirements is important for other people. A few of you have already heard my story of my grandfather, to whom I was very close. Though he lacked education beyond high school, his understanding of economics was rather sophisticated, and he was a staunch advocate of free trade. We were in the sawmill business, and he stated with great eloquence why the United States should abandon tariffs on everything except those on lumber from Canada and Mexico. We simply cannot ask our students to make the hard choices I will review in a moment if we are not also willing to make similarly hard choices.

Let me share with you why this is such an urgent matter and why we have no option other than to deal with it decisively and without delay. Our graduation rates over the past seven years have experienced a slight but rather consistent increase. And yet, over that same period, the number of new entering students, freshmen and transfers, has also seen a slight but steady decline. How can this be? If more are leaving, shouldn't we be able to admit more? The answer is found in the increasing number of continuing students. There are two basic reasons for this increase in our continuing student population. First, more students, especially women, are persisting to graduation, rather than discontinuing

their education prior to obtaining a degree. Obviously, that is a trend we do not want to change. Indeed, given the caliber of students now entering BYU, we anticipate that the numbers who stay the course until graduation will continue to increase. But the other factor influencing the number of continuing students is the one we have been discussing; those who are persisting to graduation are taking an average of 11.9 semesters, or almost six years to obtain what we euphemistically refer to as a four-year degree.

According to our best projections, unless we take some positive action to change these circumstances, the total number of new students admitted will continue to decrease at least until the fall of 1997. Moreover, the fall of 1997 is about the time that our probable admission applicant pool will reach an all-time high, with an increase of around 30 percent over that population as it stands today. Obviously, something has to be done. The prospect of further substantial reductions in our entering students in the face of greatly increasing numbers of highly qualified applicants is, to put it bluntly, unacceptable. We have no choice but to face this one head-on. It is not something that would just be nice to do. It is something we must do. It is a task that we all share. Each must make a contribution.

6. Over the coming year, we will give serious consideration to the general principle that the number of fall and winter semesters that each student is entitled to consume at our highly subsidized tuition levels may be limited—probably to 10 semesters, but perhaps to some other fixed number. Once that ceiling is reached, the tuition for future fall and winter semesters would increase—perhaps significantly. Tuition for courses taken during the spring and summer would not be affected. We obviously need to explore together and with our students over the coming school year the ramifications of this general principle before defining and adopting it. Among them are:

By how much should the subsidy be reduced, once the 10 fall-and-winter-semester level has been reached? How should it be prorated for students admitted prior to implementation of the subsidy cap? Should there be any exceptions? And, if so, what kinds of procedures should be in place to deal with the exceptions? What should be the rule for the true five-year programs? In the coming months we will seek your counsel and that of our students in response to these and related questions. The general principle is a sound one, we believe, and is worth our serious consideration.

7. Beginning with the 1994-95 school year, we have also proposed a substantially lower tuition for spring and summer than for fall or winter. You will note a common thread running through several of these proposals: it is an effort to shift more registrations from fall and winter to spring and summer. The tuition differential that we anticipate would be rather substantial, in order to provide a real incentive. Once again, there are details to be resolved over the coming year, most prominent of which is how large the differential should be.

Another benefit I see emerging from this time-to-graduate initiative—and a very important one—is that the process of dealing with these issues will have a unifying effect as we combine our efforts toward a common goal that holds so much promise of benefit for our students, for those who would like to be our students, and for the quality of our educational offering.

There are also other things that unify us. Probably the most important is the love that we have for our university. It is, in the words of our school song, “the college that we love.” Just yesterday I received a response to our annual giving campaign from a man who had enclosed a \$15 check and written on the card: “92 years of age—budget low. But love

my BYU.” I have sensed this love among all of you. And I share it. I love what BYU did for me as a student. I love the freedom I enjoy here to think, to say, to write, and to act consistently with my conviction of the reality of the Restoration, with my professional interests, and with the relationships that exist between the two. I love my association with valued colleagues and the strength I draw—including physical strength—from you prayers, your encouragement, and your support. Over the past year perhaps more than at any other time I have understood and appreciated that while we are many, we are also one. *E pluribus unum. De los muchos, somos uno.* Across all languages, from Latin to English to Spanish to anything else, the meaning is the same. And because of our manyness and our oneness, we can do it. We can make it work. *We will* make it work. We have found a better way to do the business of a university. Here on these 640 acres, faith and intellect will work together, not just as partners, but as integral, inseparable parts of single whole. The two are one.

In conclusion, I return briefly to our theme scripture, one of whose central focuses is on light, as Bruce Hafen has reminded us with his insightful thoughts developed from the 88th section of the Doctrine and Covenants. Many scriptures refer to light, and in several contexts. Our theme scripture emphasizes the unifying effect that light can have on the spirit and the mind. Paul used the metaphor of a light on a hill. One of my favorite lines from a song sung by our Young Ambassadors seems appropriate here: “Can you feel us shine on a distant hill?” may we, in our oneness, continue to shine; may we truly be a light on a hill. And may we make it not so distant. That we may so shine and that it may be not just a hill, but a Mount Everest, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.