

BYU: Where We've Been, Where We Are, and Some Possibilities for the 21st Century

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As I told you last year, I regard these Annual University Conference talks as the most important that I give each year. They are also the ones over whose preparation I agonize the most. This one is different only in that I recognize it will be my last. I appreciate more than words can tell the expressions of love and support that I have received from so many of you. I have also sensed, and appreciated, our shared objective that that these remaining months not be characterized by waiting, wondering, and winding down, and that our institutional mind-set be one of finishing strong. I especially appreciated Bruce's remarks this morning, coming as they did from a dear friend of unquestioned loyalty with whom I have worked literally side-by-side at this university on two different occasions and covering a span of 10 years.

It seems appropriate on this occasion to share with you some of my thoughts about our university from our beginnings in the 1870s to our future as we enter the 21st century.

Accordingly, I would like to examine Brigham Young University from three different historical perspectives:

1. Where we have been, and the progress we have made over the now 120 years of our existence.
2. Where we are now.
3. What will be some of the likely characteristics of the BYU of the 21st century, or at least the early portion of it.

I. The Path by Which We Arrived

The Brigham Young Academy began life as one of many Church "academies" scattered throughout the Church and designed to serve the needs of local areas. The day-to-day, year-to-year overpowering issue during its first three or four decades was survival. The total annual teacher payroll between 1877 and 1882 ranged from \$2,265.45 to \$4,263.90. During that same period tuition averaged about \$4 per term, and very little of that was paid in cash. Residents generally brought their grain, fruit, beef, cloth, and other commodities to the tithing office, where they received the value of the goods in scrip, which was then used to pay tuition. Faculty members in turn used the scrip to procure supplies at local stores and at the tithing office, though local stores often discounted the scrip by about 10 percent. Even earlier, teachers at the Timpanogos Branch of the University of Deseret—the immediate

Rex E. Lee was president of Brigham Young University when this Annual University Conference address was given on 28 August 1995.

predecessor of the BYA—were compelled to “make monthly peregrinations with huge wheelbarrows to collect the school fees paid in turnips, molasses and pumpkins.” Worst of all, faculty members sometimes went months at a time without any compensation at all.

Similar deprivations were felt by our students. Rose Vickery in the fall of 1897 made the three-day trip from Levan, Utah, to Provo by wagon and team with her parents to attend Brigham Young Academy. She records that on October 31, 1897, “after arriving home after meeting [we] felt quite despondent from the fact that we had no supper and what was worse there was nothing to eat. A shout of joy went up however when our Nellie emerged from the bottommost realm of the flour bin with a hard and blackened crust which we ate in grateful silence and soon afterward retired. Half a loaf is better than no bread and ditto with that crust. Good night.”

These stories of great sacrifice by students, faculty, and administrators were matched by local Church leaders, without whose financial support the Brigham Young Academy would never have survived into the 20th century. Abraham O. Smoot was, by the standards of his day, a wealthy local businessman, but he died virtually insolvent because he was willing to use his fortune to save the academy. Although he and Jesse Knight were among the most prominent of our early financial benefactors, there were many others, and we must always remember and be grateful to them.

It is not only helpful but also, I think, necessary that we periodically remind ourselves of our humble yet proud early beginnings. Today our support from the Church, both financial and otherwise, is generous and solidly committed. Never again will we function, as we did for the first 25 years, without indoor plumbing or electricity, and never again will our faculty members be forced to go door-to-door to neighbors in Provo filling wheelbarrows with turnips and pumpkins. The hardships of those

early days will never be repeated. And we would no more want to bring them back than we would the crickets, or Haun’s Mill, or the Extermination Order.

Although those early experiences will not be repeated, neither are they irrelevant. We have much to learn and to relearn from those early stalwarts who were willing to sacrifice so much and thereby laid the foundation for what we are today.

II. The BYU of 1995

And what are we today? We are the nation’s largest private, church-related university, consisting of two campuses, one located in Provo and the other in Laie, Hawaii. Our dominant emphasis is undergraduate teaching, though at our Provo campus about 10 percent of our 27,000 students are engaged in graduate programs and our 1,400 faculty members are engaged in research efforts that make significant contributions to the body of the world’s knowledge, keep us abreast of our own particular fields, and generally enhance the quality not only of our teaching but also of our total academic efforts. Most important of all, in my opinion, we stand alone among the universities of the world in the success of our efforts to accomplish excellent scholarship and learning in an environment of great faith.

The single most prominent feature of our history over the 12 decades of our existence has been our steady and remarkable progress. Each of those decades has been quite different from any of the others, and at the conclusion of any one of them we were a notably better school than at the conclusion of the preceding one, whether measured by the traditional academic standards of the world or by our own twin objectives of academic and spiritual achievement. It has been my privilege to be a personal participant as a student, faculty member, and administrator through substantial portions of five of those 12 decades—the early ‘50s through the mid-‘90s—and to observe this

steady increase in quality over that period of time. The BYU to which I returned as a faculty member and dean of the law school in 1972 was a much different and much better university than the one from which I graduated in 1960, and I have also seen that incremental quality enhancement continue over the years since that time.

Beyond any question, the quality of a university is determined principally by the quality of its faculty. Faculty cannot function without a supporting staff, and at this university we are blessed with the very best. But the ultimate objective of a university, imparting knowledge through teaching and discovering new knowledge—and here, at BYU, merging discovered knowledge with revealed knowledge—is the province of the faculty, and the excellence of a university is very properly measured by the excellence of its faculty.

When this administration took office a little over six years ago, we recognized that our most important challenge was based on two demographic facts. First, assuming an average retirement age of 65, between 35 and 40 percent of our faculty would be retiring during the decade of the 1990s. Change was therefore inevitable, and it could range all the way from near disaster to significant improvement. The second projected demographic phenomenon of the '90s was a nationwide decrease in available PhD graduates seeking academic employment, particularly in some of the sciences.

So far at least, the effects on us of any shortage of candidates has been minimal. In most disciplines we have had several highly qualified candidates for each available position. The bottom line is: This fall we will welcome the seventh entering "class" of new faculty who have joined us since I became your president. By a large margin, the strength of those 700 new faculty members, taken as a whole, is the most significant accomplishment of my administration. To be sure, over that time we have lost some very strong teachers and scholars to

retirement. But it is equally clear that the BYU faculty of today is notably stronger than it was seven years ago, and stronger than it has ever been in the history of our university. There is a temptation to point to some of the superstars—persons with international reputations from some of the world's finest universities—who have joined us over that period. But the incremental growth in the quality of our faculty is not measured alone by superstars rather, it is manifest across the entire breadth of our new hires over the past seven years.

There has also been an increase in the quality of our students—some aspects of which are measurable and others of which are not. The consistent increases in the numerical credentials of our entering freshman classes are both encouraging and also sobering. For this fall's admitted freshman class at the Provo campus, the average ACT score is 27.2 and the average high school GPA is 3.72. As most of you know, for the past five years we have not made our admissions decisions based strictly on spiritual worthiness—that is, a simple yes or no decision by the bishop—and high school performance as measured by grades and ACT scores. Rather, we have combined those objective considerations with an effort to ascertain qualities of leadership and seriousness about and devotion to the kinds of values that we hope to instill in our students. If we had not included these subjective factors in our admissions decisions, the average ACT score and high school GPA of this year's entering freshman class would be even higher.

The sobering aspect of these figures is, of course, our inability, because of our enrollment cap, to accommodate additional highly qualified applicants whose lives would be enriched by a BYU education and whose presence would also improve the quality of our university. For example, just five years ago, without the subjective factors, our average high school GPA and ACT scores were 3.52 and 26.6, respectively. That is one of two reasons why

our graduation initiatives, designed to reduce our average graduation time from 12 semesters to eight, are so important. The other reason is the benefits that will accrue to those whom we have admitted if we can add an additional two years to their lives after graduation. It is not our objective to rush our students' educational experience, nor to detract from its quality, but in the great majority of instances, four years should be sufficient to obtain a degree.

And so, the two most important answers to the second question that I posed at the outset—"Where are we now?"—are that we have an excellent faculty and a well-prepared student body, and there is every indication that both of these will continue to improve. There are also some other significant responses to that second question. Our academic freedom document, our standards for continuing university employment, and the procedures by which those are implemented have clarified and put into place principles and standards that in my view have long been cornerstones of our university's values and procedures, but which have now been made more explicit, thanks to the work of faculty committees whose recommendations were approved by the board of trustees.

The BYU of today is also involved in two initiatives having inter-related long-range implications. They are our strategic long-range planning study and our capital campaign. The first has involved literally tens of thousands of hours of effort by virtually everyone on this campus and should enable us for years into the future to take concrete administrative, budgeting, and other resource allocation steps that will better enable us to be the kind of university that we, through our own efforts and those of our board of trustees, have determined we want to be. And the capital campaign, which is now in its silent phase and which will be publicly announced sometime next spring, should provide many of the resources to achieve those

objectives and to raise the quality of our university to a new plateau.

The BYU of 1995 is also a university where very significant expansion of our academic and other buildings is now underway or has recently been completed. Frankly, this has come as a surprise to me. One of my assumptions upon entering my present responsibilities was that with a frozen enrollment there would be very little need for additional buildings. By contrast, our physical plant people inform me that the projects of the last few years plus others to which we are now committed constitute the period of most intense building activity in their experience and probably the most intense period of our history. I am now convinced that, notwithstanding our enrollment ceiling, there will always be building activity on this campus, for reasons that fall into several categories. First, some buildings simply become physically worn out to the point that it is more economical to replace them. The classic example is our Joseph Smith Building. Other buildings do not become physically obsolescent but have to be replaced because the nature of the academic discipline has changed so remarkably—as illustrated by changes that have occurred over the past half century in the way the physical and biological sciences are taught, thereby necessitating the addition of our new Ezra Taft Benson Building and the complete renovation of the Eyring Science Center.

A third category of building activity that has traditionally been necessary and currently constitutes one of our largest and most expensive projects involves our two libraries. One of these projects, the Howard W. Hunter Law Library, is already underway, ground having been broken on Law Day, May 1, of this year; and the major expansion of our Harold B. Lee Library is scheduled to begin in May of 1996. We are told that sometime after the turn of the century advancing technology should overtake the ever-expanding need for additional library capacity so that our successors may not need

to continue these very expensive library expansions every 20 years, or at least not on the same scale. But that time has not yet come, and as a consequence our library expansion is one of the largest and most expensive building projects ever undertaken on this campus.

A final category consists of what we sometimes refer to as “enrichment” buildings—buildings whose contributions to our basic academic endeavor vary from building to building. These enrichment buildings have consistently been financed by what we refer to as “local funds”—such as those resulting from our development efforts or from reserves built up by the activities conducted in those buildings. Classic examples are our Museum of Art, the football stadium and other athletic facilities, and the Wilkinson Center, which is now undergoing major renovation and expansion.

The short answer to the questions Where are we today? therefore, is that our faculty, our student body, and our administrators and staff are the strongest group in our history. Although we still have some space needs, on the whole our physical facilities are attractive and well suited for their purposes. With the adoption of our constitutional-type organic documents, we have a good understanding of what is expected of us as faculty and staff. And, finally, with our strategic planning effort and our capital campaign we are well positioned to build for the future, using as the basis for this growth and progress the values and objectives that we and our board of trustees have identified and to whose achievement our financial supporters throughout the world are willing to contribute. All of these strengths position us well toward achieving our central reason for existence: integrating discovered knowledge and truth with revealed knowledge and truth as inseparable parts of a single learning whole, with demonstrated and acknowledged competence and excellence in each. To paraphrase President McKay, if we fail in that objective, then our other successes will not matter much. And if

we succeed, then all of the effort and sacrifice of those who have gone before, and the very considerable efforts that are being expended today and will be in the future, will have borne good fruit.

III. Some Speculations About the BYU of the 21st Century

And this brings us to the third and final question, What about the BYU of the future? From time to time people have asked me what I think will be the dominant characteristics of our university 10, 15, or 20 years from now. I have enjoyed speculating on this issue, and this, my final Annual University Conference address, seems an appropriate time to share with you some of my conclusions, so long as you are aware that they rest only on my own speculation. I have tried to separate what I really believe will happen from what I hope will happen, but I am not sure I have been totally successful. Against that background, and with the full acknowledgement that many of the conclusions may turn out to be completely wrong, let me offer the following:

- First, the BYU of the 21st century, and even beyond, will always be what we are now and what we have been from the beginning, a predominantly LDS university. Our reason for being, as well as our unique niche among American colleges and universities, is solidly grounded in our religious affiliation.

I am convinced that the three keys to a religious university remaining a religious university (a rare occurrence, as demonstrated by our American experience of the past century or so) are (1) a governing board composed of members of the sponsoring church, preferably the same leaders who have authority and responsibility not only over the university but also for the larger church; (2) a faculty that is composed predominantly, though not exclusively, of church members; and (3) heavy and

continuous church financial support. Let me expand briefly on each of these.

1. *The University's Governing Board.* This nation and its people need greater religious influence in higher education, not less—more fine universities that take their religious sponsorship seriously, not fewer. The starting point for the achievement of that objective is the composition of the university's governing board.

The reason I feel so comfortable with our own governance arrangement is that our board of trustees consists of the same people who are charged with implementing worldwide the Restoration in all of its aspects. At any given time, our board includes, among others, all three members of the First Presidency and half the members of the Quorum of the Twelve. There are no members of the board who are not also general officers of the Church. Thus, governing policies set for BYU are inseparably tied to those of the larger Church as it expands and strengthens the restored kingdom.

2. *The Faculty.* Given the centrality of the faculty of any university to carrying out the university's mission, I am convinced it follows necessarily that a university attempting to integrate faith and intellect as inseparable parts of a holistic learning process should be composed of those who not only understand but also are adherents to those spiritual objectives.

In this respect there is a difference between the faculty and the board of trustees. Because of the very different nature of their respective involvements with the university—the one a deliberative body dealing in many instances with confidential, sensitive matters and the other carrying out the day-to-day work of the university—the faculty need not be composed entirely of those who adhere to the sponsoring religion. Indeed, I will go further: a religious university can perform both aspects of its mission better if some of its faculty—not a large percentage, but some—are nonmembers of the sponsoring church but who understand

and support its principles and practices. Our board's policy establishes a definite preference for LDS Church members, but it is a preference that can be overcome in specific instances.

I want to make it very clear that there is an important difference between the initial hiring on the one hand and opportunities available to all faculty members once they are hired related to such important matters as promotion, tenure, salary, etc. there is a higher hurdle for the non-LDS applicant at the initial hiring stage, but once the applicant has cleared that higher hurdle, there are no distinctions drawn between members and nonmembers with respect to opportunities for advancement and other advantageous treatment.

3. *The Financial Support.* For as long as I can remember, reaching back at least to my days here as a student, BYU presidents, including me, have reminded our students and our broader public that the percentage of their total educational expenses borne by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has varied between the high 60s and the low 70s. And there it sits today. The Church's share hovers somewhere around 70 percent.

It is possible—indeed, some of us consider it desirable—that in the future BYU tuition may bear significantly more than a 30 percent share of the cost of what we impart to the student. Exactly what that share will be is beyond my ability to perceive and will be determined by others who are wiser and have greater insight than I. But the one thing of which I am certain is that there is a far greater issue at stake here—and the greatest mistake we could possibly make would be to permit the Church's share to drop too low.

I recall a report of a conversation by one of our faculty members with a colleague from another university concerning the proportion of our funds that come from the Church. After first expressing astonishment, this person said to our faculty member, "Well, I'm sure your president is attempting to change that, because

if he can't, he will never establish his independence or that of the university."

That view, while doubtless shared by most secular academics, is located a whole 180 degrees away from my own. I thought about his comment, and then I concluded that if someone were to offer a multibillion dollar endowment, the earnings of which would be sufficient for and would be used to pay our annual educational expenses, I would recommend that our board of trustees reject the offer. And I am confident they would reject it. My reasoning? History teaches and teaches unmistakably that there is a direct tie between the source of a religious school's financing and its ability to remain serious about its religious mission. It doesn't happen all of a sudden, and usually there are a couple of identifiable transitional phases, but without any exception of which I am aware, when the Church funds dwindle, so does the spiritual commitment.

Indeed, of the three factors that are essential to prevent the secularization of a religious school—governing board, faculty, and financial support—the one for which history supplies the most compelling evidence is this third one, the financial support. George Marsden, professor of history at the University of Notre Dame (and one of our forum speakers next winter), has written an interesting and informative book called *The Soul of the American University* in which he traces the very substantial exodus from religious influence experienced by so many of our American universities and some of the causes and consequences of that change.

The historical high point of the religious university occurred about the turn of the century. Just how high that high point was is dramatically illustrated by the fact that when the Carnegie Pension Fund was established in 1906, setting up a generous pension fund for college and university teachers but available only to those private institutions not owned or in any formal way controlled by a denomination, only 51 of all schools in the

United States and Canada qualified. Within a short time, however, that pattern changed dramatically, and the principal instrument of change was the shift in financial support from the churches to other sources, institutional and individual, most of whom, according to Marsden, regarded denominational ties as an "embarrassment" (*The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1994], 279). Very often this occurred under the leadership of presidents or chancellors who were themselves religious and wanted to maintain the religious quality of their schools but promoted their school with interested philanthropists as focused on broad moral principles instead of on their distinctive religious beliefs. Chancellor James Hampton Kirkland, at Vanderbilt, is described as "always tend[ing] to translate 'Methodist' into 'Christian' . . . Christian into 'liberal Christian' or the 'upbuilding of Christ's kingdom,'" a phrase that Marsden says "could encompass everything constructive in modern civilization." Marsden uses the experience of Syracuse University during the early 1900s as another prominent example for the effort "to steer a middle course and discovering how difficult that was." In 1910, after Syracuse had been rejected as a recipient of Carnegie Foundation money because it was sectarian, Chancellor James Day boldly asserted that "no university can teach people of the ideals of manhood and forget its self-respect and honor or sell its loyalty and faith for money. . . . 'The Money perish with thee' is the only answer to it" (284–85).

Brave words. Commendable words. But before the decade had passed, they were empty words.

It is quite apparent that Chancellor Day genuinely wanted to maintain Syracuse as a legitimate Methodist university and that he was not alone among the leaders of sectarian schools. But his overriding objective was to make Syracuse a great university. That

requires money, and the need for money placed Syracuse in the very predictable dilemma of having to choose between academic quality and spiritual values. Notwithstanding Chancellor Day's bold statement in 1910, "The Money perish with thee," Marsden concludes that "the effect of Day's chancellorship was to remove Syracuse from any effective Methodist control."

How blessed we are—how uniquely blessed—not to have to make the either/or decisions that so many other universities faced because of their need for financial support. There is no other university in America, and probably not in the world, that receives from a church the level of financial support that we enjoy here. I am convinced that this will continue to be one of Brigham Young University's fortunate characteristics over the coming decades.

- Another distinctive cornerstone of our university that I am confident will not change over the years is our commitment to undergraduate education. There is, I think, not another university of our size and quality that devotes anywhere nearly as large a percentage of its resources—including the most valuable resource of all, faculty time—to undergraduate teaching. To be sure, we have some very fine graduate programs, and our annual research reports show the quality and the magnitude of valuable research that is done on this campus. We are unquestionably a better university because of these graduate programs. But I do not expect our 90–10 ratio of undergraduates to graduates to change at any time in the future, for two interrelated reasons. The first ties back to our primary objective: to teach not only the basic academic disciplines but also to integrate that knowledge and understanding with a commitment to a value system based on principles of restored truth. Drawing on my own experience as a college and graduate student, I am convinced that it is during the undergrad-

uate years that the opportunities for imparting that kind of spiritual/academic bilingualism are the greatest. This conclusion would appear to be bolstered by our self-study.

In addition, graduate education, not just in the sciences but generally across the board, is more expensive than undergraduate education. Taking these two factors together—the inverse relationship between the age of the student and our ability to instill a combination of academic and values training plus the increased cost of graduate education—means, quite simply, that in terms of the largest of objectives we are trying to accomplish here, we get a bigger return from our undergraduate than from our graduate investments. Again I reiterate: This is not a prediction that we will discontinue or even diminish the extent of our graduate programs, but only that they will not increase from the existing 90–10 ratio. Hence, undergraduate education will continue to be the jewel in our BYU crown, but our graduate programs will also, I am convinced, continue to get better and better because they are an essential part of our total university.

- What about the size of our school 10, 20, 30, or more years from now? For several reasons I predict that our present enrollment caps of 27,000 at our Provo campus and 2,000 in Hawaii will not change much, if any. From an administrative standpoint this prospect of nongrowth is a real blessing. Although we presently need some additional space for faculty offices and other uses, our two campuses and our entire infrastructure are designed to accommodate a student body of about our present size. Expanding significantly beyond our present student enrollment would necessarily syphon much of our effort away from attending to the quality of our educational program. There will be pressures, as the Church expands, for higher education experiences that incorporate a spiritual element that distinctively ties back to restored truth. But I believe

the response to those pressures will not include an expanded BYU. Other alternatives include significantly enriched institute programs or possibly adding other two-year schools.

Though I do not see an increase in the quantity of our students, I do see an increase in their quality. Assuming our student enrollment caps remain at about 27,000 and 2,000 respectively, the level of preparation of our students will necessarily continue to increase, not only academically but spiritually as well. Two side effects should result from this increasing quality. First, I believe there will be a corresponding increase in the quality of our classroom teaching as our faculty members are challenged more and more by better-prepared students. Second, I believe that the number of BYU undergraduate students who go on to obtain advanced degrees will increase and that this will continue to be our great strength in faculty recruitment: students who obtain their first degree here then go on to get a doctor's degree somewhere else and return as members of our faculty.

- Over the coming decades I see an increase in the ability of our university to contribute effectively to a growing international church. For a variety of very practical reasons the proportion of our international students will never match our international church membership, but I do anticipate that over the years international students in increasing numbers will come to BYU. Then, after what we hope will be their acquisition of substantial intellectual and spiritual value because of their BYU experience, they will be more effective leaders throughout the world in the Church and in their broader communities. The Marriott School has already taken the lead in this effort, and their experience shows two things. The first is that it costs money, and the second is that the results probably justify the cost, at least up to a certain point. I believe that an additional long-range linkage between our

university and a growing international church will be an increase in the ability of our faculty to assist in selected projects throughout the world that will be useful to the growth of the kingdom.

- I am convinced that over the coming years the levels of discomfort with our academic freedom policy will gradually, but steadily, diminish to the point of virtual nonexistence. The reasons are quite simple. Our academic freedom statement contains, in the final analysis, only one important restriction, and that is that members of our faculty should not use their positions as faculty members—whether in the classroom, in their publications, or elsewhere—to do things that are adverse to the interests of our sponsoring church. There are some people for whom that is a significant limitation. There are others for whom it is irrelevant. There is a third category of people for whom a very large academic freedom concern—indeed, for some, our largest academic freedom concern—is the freedom to explore, teach, and publish concerning the ways that our faith strengthens our scholarship and teaching and vice versa. Over the years our academic freedom standards and requirements for continuing employment—now that they have been formally published—will become more generally known and more generally understood among our applicants. There will certainly be a corresponding self-selection process in which people for whom it is important to take positions either in the classroom, or through their publications, or otherwise that are harmful to the Church simply will not apply here. That will mean a proportionately larger increase in the applicants whose views fall in the overlapping second and third categories, those for whom taking positions harmful to the Church is not important but who are interested in the academic freedom to pursue relationships between their faith and their scholarly disciplines. And this will

necessarily lead not only to a decreasing level of discomfort, eventually reaching the point of virtual nonexistence, but also to an increase in true academic freedom because of the shift just described in the academic interests of applicants for faculty positions.

•I also believe that the coming years at BYU will see a gradual decrease in an unfortunate pattern that has existed at BYU for a long time: the practice of raising directly with members of the board of trustees or other General Authorities, either anonymously or otherwise, complaints that ought to have been raised initially with the person involved. The counsel of the Doctrine and Covenants on this issue is quite precise: “And if thy brother or sister offend thee, thou shalt take him or her between him or her and thee alone” (D&C 42:88). Failing resolution at this initial stage “between him or her and thee alone,” I further predict that the issues will proceed as they should through the regular university channels before being raised, if necessary, with members of the board.

Now, before you cry out that I have lost all touch with reality, let me tell you why I think this will happen. Under procedures established in connection with our standards governing academic freedom and continuing employment at the university, communications concerning the university that are sent directly to any General Authority are not to be acted upon by the person receiving that communication unless they involve ecclesiastical matters, in which case they may be sent to the stake presidents. Matters involving the university, as most of them do, are forwarded to the commissioner of the Church Educational System. The commissioner then sends those communications to us, and we send them down the line until they reach the person with whom the matters should have been raised in the first instance. Failing resolution at that stage, the matter will then proceed up through established university

channels and eventually, if necessary, to the commissioner or the board. It is not a perfect system; the preferred one would be for those who feel a compulsion to complain to General Authorities to follow instead the process counseled by the Doctrine and Covenants and then let the grievance proceed from the bottom up, rather than from the top down. But I believe that in time that is where we are headed as people come to realize—as each of you now realizes because I have told you—that since the only consequence of complaining directly to the Brethren will be that the complaint is swiftly remanded to where it ought to have started, everyone’s interests are better served by beginning the process at the proper place. I regard this procedural reform, as simple and as rooted in common sense as it is, to be one of the most important that has occurred during my time in office. If followed—and each of you can help by raising your initial complaints at the bottom rather than at the top—it will lead to enhanced feelings of brotherhood, sisterhood, and collegiality.

Conclusion

The achievement of what I am convinced is our all-subsuming goal, integrating intellect and faith as mutually supportive means by which learning is acquired, is something that we are now and have been for a long time in the process of accomplishing. For me there have been very few instances in which I have not been able to reconcile what I seem to have learned through these twin channels of intellect and faith. There are, however, a very few. Let me tell you of one simple, yet for me compelling experience that I had rather early in life that brought home to me in an almost revelatory way how to deal with my own inability to reconcile those rare instances in which my mind tells me one thing and my testimony tells me another.

During my growing-up years my family was in the sawmill business, and I spent all

of my summers in sawmill camps, little communities created for the sole purpose of supporting the sawmilling and logging operations. It was a kind of life that simply does not exist anymore. Until I was about 16 years old, none of the camps in which we lived had any kind of indoor plumbing or electricity. And then, when I was about a junior in high school, we acquired a little diesel-powered light plant that would generate electricity from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. Each night it was my job to turn off the light plant at 10:00 p.m. It was a noisy machine, and for some reason when I turned it off every dog in the camp (they outnumbered the human beings about two to one) would howl for about 15 seconds. Because of the remoteness of our location the air was pristine pure and clear, the sky black, and the stars—myriads that I could see and millions more that I knew were out there—stood out in brilliant contrasts to the blackened sky. As I would gaze out into those awesome spaces, I would always come around to the ultimate question: What is really out there? The scriptures told me that space is without end. My brain was unable then, and is unable still, to comprehend that fact. I simply lack the capacity to perceive how it is that space can continue on and on and never come to an end. And yet my mind is sufficiently developed to comprehend that the alternative is totally unacceptable. If there is some point out there where it all comes to an end, then what is on the other side? It was on those evenings as I stood there at the side of our light plant gazing into the massiveness of our Heavenly Father's creations, that I came to an appreciation both of the powers of the human mind and also of its limitations. I concluded then that the rational and the extrarational are two processes by which thinking, believing sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father can gain understanding. Any proficiency we acquire in the use of one should lead only to increased respect for the other. Those rare instances where we are unable rationally to

explain a principle of revealed truth prove nothing more than that there are some facts, some truths, some realities that our mortal minds are simply unable to comprehend.

It is with profound and somewhat conflicting emotions that Janet and I anticipate the next chapter of our lives, scheduled to begin about four months from now. On May 12, 1989, when President Hinckley announced that I was to be the 10th president of BYU, I referred to my lifelong love affair with this university. The intervening six and a half years have served only to deepen and strengthen those feelings and give them additional dimension and meaning. Truly we have experienced "how good and how pleasant it is to dwell together in unity." I have never pictured myself as a university president or any other kind of academic administrator and would never have selected any such career options. Indeed, over the years I have responded quickly, politely, and negatively to the few overtures for such opportunities that I have had from other schools. But BYU and the presidency I am now bringing to a close are completely different, for two separate but quite interrelated reasons. The first is what we have been discussing this morning and on numerous occasions: this place is very different; we are constantly striving to make it even more different; and the difference involves nothing less than our reason for being. Second, so very much of everything that I am—my values, my aspirations, the way I think and the things I do, my original acquaintance with Janet, our developing relationship over the years, and even my relationships with my children—is solidly and inextricably tied to BYU. Not accepting the offer of this position would have been tantamount to rejecting a large part of myself.

There has been no period in my life that has been more rewarding and fulfilling, both personally and professionally, than the last 75 months, principally because far more than any other responsibility I have ever had, this is

one that I shared with Janet. It has truly been a partnership arrangement, which has made the performance of my duties not only more effective but also more enjoyable. In addition to the usual tasks traditionally performed by BYU presidential wives, Janet has magnified the position with several innovative and useful initiatives, including functions with new faculty, faculty women, and faculty wives and a variety of activities with the students.

There are so many things that we will deeply miss as we open the pages of the next chapter of our lives. But the things we will miss are not as important as the things of which we will continue to be a part—things like the love and common understanding that you and I have for each other and for BYU, our shared dedication to bringing our institution and ourselves to the full measure of our potential and to the fullest understanding of what the Lord must have meant when he urged us to gain understanding, even by learning and also by faith. These are the big things. These are what make BYU what it is now and what it is sure to become in the future. And Janet's and my great joy is that as continuing members of

the BYU community, working and living here as part of this great experimental enterprise, even though in a different capacity, we will still be, as everyone here today is, an integral and indispensable part of that great undertaking.

Truly it is a great undertaking. And we can and must make it work. This is not just another university precisely because our sponsoring church is not just another church. It is the restored kingdom of Jesus Christ. I was not there on that spring day in 1820 when Joseph Smith saw the Father and the Son. Neither was it my privilege to be present on the banks of the Susquehanna River on May 15, 1829, when John the Baptist laid his hands on the heads of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and restored the same priesthood by which he had baptized the Savior Himself. But I can tell you with the same surety as though I had actually been there and witnessed those events, they really occurred. The Restoration is real. Prophets are once again here among us. And this our university, this college that we love, is an integral part of, and we must make it a more effective part of, that broader restored kingdom. Of this I testify in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.