

# Brigham Young University in the New Millennium

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The new millennium will begin January 1, 2001. By then problems associated with the year 2000 will be solved, and we will be looking forward to the completion of I-15, the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics, and a new century. As Brigham Young University enters the third millennium since Christ's birth, what will its future be? What are the forces that will shape BYU in the years ahead? What role will the university play in the kingdom? Will it become more or less important to the future of the Church?

I believe there are four key factors that will determine answers to the above questions and shape the university in the early part of the next millennium. These forces include (1) the Lord's plan for the university, (2) Church growth, (3) advances in technology, and (4) the financial resources available. I begin with the Lord's plan.

## **The Lord's Plan and the Importance of Education**

Is the Lord interested in Brigham Young University? Is it an integral part of the Church? Does he have a plan for BYU? Prophetic statements provide a "yes" answer to the three questions. Although we do not know the details of the plan, we do have specific state-

ments specifying the value of education in the kingdom and the Lord's commitment to the university. We are all familiar with the revelations that specify the value the Lord places on learning: "The glory of God is intelligence" (D&C 93:36). "If a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life . . . , he will have so much the advantage in the world to come" (D&C 130:19). "It is impossible for a man [or a woman] to be saved in ignorance" (D&C 131:6). These scriptural statements make clear the importance of lifelong learning. In this regard, President John Taylor stated:

*You will see the day that Zion will be as far ahead of the outside world in everything pertaining to learning of every kind as we are to-day in regard to religious matters. You mark my words, and write them down, and see if they do not come to pass. [Journal of Discourses 21:100]*

A story involving President John Taylor is even more instructive with regard to the Savior's

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*Merrill J. Bateman was the president of Brigham Young University when this address was delivered at the Monday morning session of the BYU Annual University Conference on 24 August 1998.*

interest in and commitment to the university. Some months after becoming president of the Church, President Taylor was visited by

*Zina Young Williams, the dean of women of the Brigham Young Academy in Provo and a daughter of Brigham Young. The academy was less than a decade old and was experiencing serious financial difficulties that, if not resolved, would mean its closing. After listening to Sister Williams's plea for help, President Taylor took her hand "in a fatherly way" and said:*

*"My dear child, I have something of importance to tell you that I know will make you happy. I have been visited by your father. He came to me in the silence of the night clothed in brightness and with a face beaming with love and confidence told me things of great importance and among others that the school being taught by Brother [Karl G.] Maeser was accepted in the heavens and was a part of the great plan of life and salvation; . . . and there was a bright future in store for . . . preparing . . . the children of the covenant for future usefulness in the Kingdom of God, and that Christ himself was directing, and had a care over this school."*

[Leonard J. Arrington, ed., *The Presidents of the Church* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1986), pp. 108–9]

What does it mean for the university to be "accepted in the heavens" as "a part of the great plan of life and salvation"? For any person associated with BYU, it is humbling to contemplate that a prophet has stated that "Christ himself [is] directing, and [has] a care over this school." And the purpose of the university is to prepare "the children of the covenant for future usefulness in the Kingdom."

It is clear from President Taylor's statement that the university is an integral and important part of the Lord's kingdom. It has played and will continue to play a central role in educating members. There are times, however, when it would be helpful to have the Lord's blueprint for the university for all to see—but that is not

how he operates. Generally the Savior provides a broad outline and a set of principles. He then asks his servants to seek and listen to the Spirit in order to fill in the details. For example, the charge to the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve is to take the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, but the Lord does not tell them how or when or where except through the quiet whisperings of the Spirit. The same is true for Brigham Young University. Guidelines have been given by the Lord, and it is important that all of us listen to the whisperings of the Spirit—not only the board, but also the administration, faculty, staff, and students.

As noted, the Lord has given some broad guidelines with regard to education in the Church that apply to the university. First, every member is to be "nourished by the good word of God" (Moroni 6:4). Nourishing is an educational process. The nourishment needed is both spiritual and temporal and is an important part of each member's development and a key component of the Lord's retention program. One peculiar aspect of Church membership is that the more educated people are, the more active they are. This relationship is unusual; the opposite is observed in a number of other faiths. (See Stan L. Albrecht, "The Consequential Dimension of Mormon Religiosity," *BYU Studies* 29, no. 2 [spring 1989]: 100–103.) Education is an important part of the plan of salvation, and the emphasis it receives in the Church increases student demand for higher education over time.

A second principle is that an educated membership in each country is important for the long-term development of the Church. Wherever President Hinckley goes, he encourages the youth of the Church to obtain an education. He understands that education is not only important for their temporal and spiritual welfare, but also educated people are important assets in building the kingdom. As the Church moves beyond the first generation in

foreign lands, LDS student demand for higher education will increase.

There is a corollary to the “nourishment” principle and the importance of a worldwide educated membership. It is that the educational status of Church members across the world will improve over time because of the impact of Church teachings on each individual. Revealed truths regarding the importance of education, combined with prophets emphasizing the same, raise expectations among faithful members and increase their efforts to improve themselves. In other words, revealed truth increases the demand for education. Brigham Young University has been, is, and will continue to be in the center of this educational revolution.

Before examining the most important factor that will affect BYU’s future growth and the Church’s growth, I wish to emphasize again that we are given broad outlines but little detail. Consequently we often underestimate the Savior’s involvement in our work. The Lord knows the intricacies of the pattern he is weaving, but we often fail to appreciate the intimate nature of his involvement in our personal lives and in the life of the university. I learned this lesson a few years ago. I spent 15 years studying and consulting in West Africa, believing that my work was unrelated to anything of a spiritual nature. From 1963 through 1978 I visited West Africa at least two or three times per year. I taught at a West African university. I served as a consultant to West African governments. I developed a strategy for their export markets. During these visits I had occasional contact with Africans interested in the Church. After investing considerable time and energy in the economics of that part of the world, I was invited to a meeting on the BYU campus in late 1977 with President James E. Faust. At the time he was president of the Church’s International Mission. He learned that I had two trips to West Africa planned for the first half of 1978 and asked if I would visit

some African members. Upon my return from the second trip in May 1978, I suggested to President Faust that a fireside be held for African students at Brigham Young University. The purpose was to provide direction for African members when they returned home.

The fireside was held in May 1978, with Edwin and Janath Cannon as the speakers. Brother Cannon was a counselor to President Faust in the International Mission presidency, and Sister Cannon was a member of the Relief Society General Presidency. Two weeks later the priesthood revelation was announced. A few days later I received a telephone call from President Faust inviting me to his office. During the meeting a call was issued inviting me to escort Brother Cannon through West Africa to meet with various groups who were interested in the Church and inform them of the priesthood revelation and tell them that missionaries would arrive soon. During July and August of 1978, Brother Cannon and I toured West Africa, meeting with many groups who had waited long years for missionaries to teach them the gospel. Upon our return we wrote a report for President Faust. It was then determined that Brother Cannon and I should meet with the First Presidency and give them a report. I will never forget the instructions received from David M. Kennedy, the First Presidency’s international ambassador, just prior to meeting with President Kimball and his counselors. His instructions were: “Be succinct. Take no more than 30 minutes.” We were prepared to do just that. Two hours later we were still being interviewed by the First Presidency. President Kimball, President Tanner, and President Romney had an insatiable interest in learning as much about the Africans and their circumstances as possible.

Following the July and August 1978 trip to West Africa, my trips there ceased. I did not return to that part of the world for another nine years. From 1963 through 1978, my temporal assignments had taken me in and out of West

Africa multiple times per year. During that 15-year period I believed my work in West Africa was temporal and unrelated to the Lord's work. Looking back, I marvel at the way in which the many trips were a preparation for one special trip, and then the odyssey ended.

Was it coincidental that the African trips concluded with the 1978 journeys? Was it in the Lord's plan to use my work in Africa as a stepping-stone to accomplish his work? Although the contribution was small and the Lord easily could have achieved his purposes in other ways, it has been a reminder of the Lord's quiet, effective involvement in our lives.

In like manner, the Lord is shaping the destiny of Brigham Young University. Do we fully appreciate the Lord's intentions for this institution? Where will it be 25 years from now relative to other major universities? Will its role in the kingdom be more or less than it is now? I think of the outstanding honors that have come to our faculty during the past year and the accomplishments of the staff. I suspect that we do not understand or foresee the eventual impact of many happenings associated with the campus. For example, is the Lord weaving a mosaic with Professor Milton Lee's honorary doctorate from the University of Uppsala, Sweden, and Paul Cox's appointment to the king of Sweden's Chair for the Environment? Is Erlend Peterson's work with various Scandinavian government, business, and educational leaders part of a plan? How interested the Lord must be in Professor Cole Durham's work on religious freedom and the doors he has opened and kept open in central and eastern Europe.

There are many at the university performing scholarly work associated with the family. What will be the ultimate impact of the NGO Family Voice and our David M. Kennedy Center personnel on the United Nations' family policy? Will the new School of Family Life increase the visibility of our faculty's excellent research on family issues? Brigham Young

University has been invited to take the lead in cohosting the next World Congress on the Family. Is the invitation part of a plan?

During the past year new relationships with the Islamic world have been formed as a result of Professor Dan Peterson's Islamic translation project. Additional books will soon be off the press. As scholars at the university communicate their interest in and appreciation for the Muslim world, what will be the outcome?

When one contemplates the creations of our music and fine arts faculty or the recent contributions of the religious education faculty as they have interacted with leaders of other faiths or the teaching of more than 50 foreign tongues by the language faculty, one is awestruck with the power of this institution where so many are working in concert to advance knowledge and improve the world.

What will be the long-term consequences of the new and growing relationships between our faculty and scholars at other universities? Advances in electronic communications are significantly reducing costs and shortening response times that make practical research collaboration, planning conferences across continents, disseminating research results, etc. As will be noted later, these forces will have a profound effect on the quality of both research and teaching at this and other universities. Above all, do we appreciate the cumulative impact we are having on this planet as 8,000 young people graduate annually and move forward as "children of the covenant" to make their contribution to the kingdom and the world?

I submit that our myopic view does not allow us to see the full mosaic or to appreciate the agenda set for the university. Nevertheless, there are key influences at work that will shape BYU in the years to come. In suggesting what may lie ahead for the university during the early part of the next millennium, I will discuss the likely impact of Church growth on BYU

and then briefly examine the technological opportunities available to improve teaching, to support research, and to extend the reach of the university across the world. Also, I will provide an update on the capital campaign; suggest how some of the new, unrestricted resources will be allocated; and outline what the future may hold with regard to financial support. Along the way I hope to point out the responsibility we have individually and collectively to build a unique, world-class institution of higher learning.

### **The Impact of Church Growth on BYU**

Church growth is one of the most important factors that will define the future of Brigham Young University. As one looks to the future, membership growth will produce hundreds of thousands if not millions of first-generation young adults. Some will have prepared themselves to pursue an education at an institution of higher learning. Others will not be so fortunate. Many of these young men and women could benefit immensely if taught some basic skills and encouraged to obtain further education. For the most part, their problem will not be intellectual capacity. They will be constrained by economic and sociological barriers. If historical patterns prevail, it will take two or three generations in the Church before members overcome the personal and social barriers and acquire the financial resources to attend a university.

Church population surpassed 10 million members near the end of 1997, with 50 percent in North America, 36 percent in Latin America, and the rest spread across the other continents. In 10 years' time, the year 2008, membership is forecast at 15 million—a 50 percent increase. If present trends continue, Church membership will total almost 30 million by the year 2025—three times the current number. At that time approximately 55 percent of the members will live in Latin America, 30 percent in North America, 10 percent in Asia, and the remaining

5 percent in Africa and Europe. The bulk of the Church's population will still be in the Western Hemisphere.

Today Church membership between the ages of 18 and 25 totals 1.5 million. By the year 2025 there will be 4.5 million members in this age cohort. Today the missionary force totals 59,000 in 160-plus countries and territories. By the year 2025, a reasonable estimate is 175,000 missionaries. I suspect they will be teaching in every nation and working among every kindred, tongue, and people.

Church growth will bring increased recognition of and esteem for the Church. Increased visibility will occur not only because of increased numbers but also because Church principles produce a people who are healthy, frugal, honest, hardworking, charitable, service minded, committed to strong families, well educated, and culturally diverse but unified by covenant.

The Church Humanitarian Services and the welfare program will make the Church even more visible, especially in times of crisis. For more than 100 years Church contributions for humanitarian purposes have occurred through other international organizations—Catholic Charities, Lutheran Care, the International Red Cross, etc. With the formation of LDS Charities, a recognized NGO, the Church may now be aiding disaster victims on-site.

### **Consequences of Church Growth for BYU**

What does Church growth mean for this university? First, the pool of potential faculty, staff, and students will increase by three times or more. There will be an even more select group from which to draw. During the last 25 years the average freshman GPA has risen from 3.3 to 3.7 on a 4.0 scale while the ACT score has advanced from 22 to 27. What will these statistics be in the next 25 years, given a 29,000 student body cap? One way to forecast is to examine the top third of today's entering class. If the pool of potential students in 2025 will be

three times larger than the current pool, today's top third will approximate the average in 25 years. The average GPA for the top one-third of the 1998 entering class is 3.9. Their average ACT score is 31. If entrance criteria remain the same, only those students in the top 5 percent of the high school graduating class will be admitted to BYU. Unless admissions criteria are changed dramatically, the academic quality of the student body will continue climbing.

Church growth will affect the potential pool of faculty in the same way. A greater and greater percentage of BYU graduates will attend graduate school. More and more LDS undergraduates at other universities will pursue graduate degrees. The pool of potential faculty will increase three or four times. The pool of experienced LDS faculty teaching at other universities will grow. I believe that the impact of these changes resulting from Church growth is that the quality of education at BYU will improve faster than at other institutions of higher learning. I also suspect that these changes will bring additional pressure on the university to increase its graduate programs. The university's emphasis on undergraduate education will be tested in the future, as it has been in the past.

Not only will the quality of students, faculty, and staff improve in the years ahead but the university will become more diverse. The number of foreign students will rise. Currently from 7 to 8 percent of the student body comes from foreign countries. One suspects that the percentage will increase to 15 to 20 percent, given Church growth outside North America. Because there are some advantages to being educated in one's native land and because economic barriers will continue to exist, the growth rate in foreign student demand may not keep pace with the growth of the Church in foreign countries. Still, the increasing quality of BYU will be a magnet for students no matter where they live.

One suspects that racial and cultural diversity at the university will increase faster than overall Church growth. Convert growth rates are higher outside North America, and my impression is that conversion rates for Hispanic and black Americans are higher in North America when compared with the rate for Caucasians. There will be strong, natural forces increasing the racial, ethnic, and cultural mix on campus.

### **On-Campus Education**

Although some universities may struggle to maintain on-campus enrollment, it will not be a problem for BYU in the coming years. Increased Church membership is a key reason, but there are others. Face-to-face discussions, seminars, and labs led by an expert and aided by new technologies will continue as the most effective form of learning. Also, the university as a physical space will continue to provide a forum for social interaction. Young people will desire association with each other in educational as well as other social settings as they prepare to make marital choices. This will be true of young LDS adults even more than their nonmember counterparts because of Church teachings regarding the importance of the marriage decision.

On-campus education will be streamlined over time with the aid of technology. Lectures, data, class assignments, reading materials, exams, and other tutorial materials will be online and on CD-ROM. Students will access online information from their homes before they arrive, from their dorms after arrival, from the library, from other buildings on campus, and eventually by antennae from any location. When used appropriately, new technology has the capacity to reduce lecture time and allow for more discussion groups, seminars, and labs. To the extent that technology increases learning effectiveness, it may increase opportunities for students to be involved in research projects and free up time for faculty research. We

believe that students will be able to spend a semester off campus with some courses taught at a distance. Pilot projects exploring these possibilities are underway.

### **Distance Learning Opportunities**

BYU's Division of Continuing Education currently services more than 40,000 students. Most of the courses at present are on paper and through the mail. During the past year approximately 20 university courses have been converted to the Internet. Plans call for 50 courses on the Internet by the end of 1998, with 300 or more courses available electronically within the next five years. The new Internet courses are enriched well beyond their paper predecessors. A student anywhere in the world may enroll in a course by accessing BYU's main Web site. Payment for the course may be done over the Internet, and a password is given that allows access to the course. Eventually all of the materials will come over the Internet. Currently a CD-ROM sent to the student contains the video materials, and the disk works seamlessly with the Internet.

Hot links access video materials that include the professor describing course objectives, outlining the course, and lecturing. Hotlinks embedded in the course also take students to other Web sites and to the CD-ROM that contains enriched materials. The first BYU course on the Internet was Religion 324, the first half of the Doctrine and Covenants. The first person to sign on was a member in Japan. The first person to complete the course was a young, nonmember woman at a university in California. She was studying comparative religions and received permission to take the BYU course as part of the series.

As the number of Internet courses multiplies, so will the number of students served across the world—and at a much reduced cost. We expect the number of students enrolled in distance learning courses to multiply many times as students learn about the courses on

the Web. The quality of interactive multimedia material available online will improve considerably with time and will become even more effective in both transmitting knowledge and in providing a learning experience.

### **Brigham Young University's Responsibility**

The number of full-time students on the Provo campus will remain at 29,000. The percent of Church college-age students at BYU will decline from 3 percent in 1998 to 1 percent or less by 2025. One might ask the question "In terms of the Church, how does the university continue its important role in the kingdom and keep from becoming peripheral?" I believe the answer is twofold. First, we must focus our resources and energies to provide a world-class education for on-campus students. As new initiatives are put forward, we also must be willing to drop programs that are less valuable. We must concentrate our efforts. Professor Fuhriman's responsibilities will include the development of planning and assessment processes that help in this regard. Our undergraduate enrollment will be four times the size of Harvard's, Princeton's, or Stanford's, with our students academically equivalent to theirs. In addition, our students will have special qualities not always found on these other campuses. It is vital that we provide them with a first-class educational opportunity. The foundation is in place to do this.

Today's *U.S. News and World Report* rankings place us among the top 100 universities in the United States—in the top half of the second tier. That is a major advance from the third-tier rankings of recent years. Although I appreciate the move up in the rankings, the magazine still underestimates the quality of a BYU education. The new ranking did make some adjustments for the effects of missions on freshman retention and on graduation rates. However, these factors would improve further if we could take into account the full impact of missions. Also, 25 percent of the weighting is based on how we

are viewed by the administrations of other universities. Although they learn something about our quality from the students we send them for graduate work, most administrators are not involved in teaching. Generally their views are formed by the candidates they interview for faculty positions and the research reputation of a university's faculty. The limited number of PhD programs on this campus reduces BYU's visibility to the administrators of other institutions. Over time, however, they will come to know more about us through our students and our research.

The second condition to be met so that BYU continues playing a central role in the kingdom is that we leverage the excellence on campus to provide educational opportunities for LDS students who are unable to come here. Using distance learning courses is one approach, but there are other ways as well. Through faculty collaboration with scholars across the world, scholars at other institutions will learn to value us as a people and, therefore, create opportunities for qualified LDS students to enter their halls of learning. May I illustrate the possibilities with a short video.

[The BYU College of Engineering video illustrates two-way televideo communications between BYU in Provo; Ricks College in Rexburg, Idaho; the Institute of Higher Education in Monterrey, Mexico; and the University of Tokyo in Japan. The video depicts BYU faculty and students working with faculty and students at the other locations, sharing computer hardware and software, and designing products. In addition, faculty and students at the distant locations are able to run expensive milling machinery at BYU in Provo using the Internet and their connection to BYU's computer facilities. The video also shows BYU faculty and students teaching students at Ricks College how to operate the computer equipment and other pieces of equipment on campus. Because the distance

learning connection is over the Internet, the communications costs are very low.]

The engineering video illustrates the potential power of distance learning in a number of settings. My purpose in showing the video, however, is to illustrate the collaboration between BYU and two of the finest universities in the world—the Institute of Technology in Monterrey, Mexico, and the University of Tokyo. What if there were LDS Japanese or Mexican students interested in learning how to use the engineering software? Could they be invited to participate with the other students in Monterrey or Tokyo? Or if BYU could certify student quality, would a Brazilian university admit an LDS student who had not traveled the prescribed admissions path? I believe the day will come when our reputation and credibility will open doors for LDS students wherever they may be.

As we look forward to the next century, we must build links in a natural way between BYU and the best universities in the world. Faculty collaboration is one means. Faculty and student exchanges are another. Visits to this campus by educational leaders is a third way. The natural ties and associations BYU has with other institutions will open doors for our young people in foreign nations to obtain an education.

I also foresee the day when BYU Web programs will prepare LDS students in foreign lands to enter universities and/or find employment. Retired professors and their wives will be called on missions to serve as tutors in foreign countries to help young adults complete BYU Web courses and prepare for entrance exams. If our reputation is strong enough, LDS students living outside the U.S. will complete a university degree by taking a combination of BYU courses over the Internet and completing courses at the local university. Currently, pilot projects in Monterrey, Mexico, and São Paulo,

Brazil, are laying the foundation for these possibilities.

For the above to happen, BYU must be a world-class university. This distinctiveness will come if we follow the counsel of Elder Oaks given in last night's fireside. We must be willing to go the extra mile in our teaching and research because we have the "covenant of fire" within. If we are covenant disciples, we will not neglect the gifts we have to offer, and our sacrifice will build a Zion university that excels. Over time, faculty and administration must work together to attract and support the finest LDS faculty available as well as outstanding non-LDS scholars who share our values and support our mission.

### **Financial Resources**

If the destiny of Brigham Young University is to become world-class, from where will the financial resources come? Fortunately the board of trustees is committed to building an extraordinary institution. In the history of religious universities, there is no parallel to the Church's financial commitment to Brigham Young University. Will it continue? President Gordon B. Hinckley reiterated the Church's commitment at the April 1996 capital campaign public announcement. It is my sense that the Church will continue funding BYU near current levels, with moderate annual increases.

In addition, capital donations from individuals, foundations, and corporations are beginning to supply the university with resources that will make a difference. Four years ago President Rex Lee initiated a capital campaign with the approval of the board of trustees. The goal was to raise \$250 million in a six-year period. To date, approximately \$225 million has been received, with another \$90 million pledged. With 20 months left, it appears that the campaign will raise more than \$300 million. An important aspect of the capital development program is that a foundation is being laid for continued giving by friends of BYU.

Relationships are being forged so that donations to the university will continue at an annual rate of \$50 million after the campaign ends with the expectation that the giving level will increase over time.

Of the \$225 million raised to date, \$40 million has been contributed for student scholarships. Most of the scholarship donations are restricted to various colleges, departments, and programs. Consequently these funds are in the hands of the deans and department chairs. More than \$50 million of the total received is in the form of gifts in kind. These gifts include expensive equipment, software, and various other materials that aid research.

Donations for the Howard W. Hunter Law Library and the Harold B. Lee Library addition total approximately \$20 million. Approximately \$30 million has been raised for direct faculty support, including chairs, professorships, curriculum development, and research. The income flow from the unrestricted portion of the faculty support funds will be used to support new university professorships. The balance of the funds are restricted to special programs. However, a number of the restricted program gifts also support faculty research.

During the past few months, Vice President Alan Wilkins and his staff have been working with deans and department chairs to select faculty to occupy a number of new university professorships that will be funded from capital donations given for that purpose. Within the next few days the recipients of 11 new professorships will be announced. The new professorships will carry a stipend and provide funds for teaching and research support.

Given the opportunity to redesign courses and take advantage of new technology, a curriculum development fund is being established. Discussions with deans, department chairs, and faculty will establish the guidelines for allocating funds to support courseware development. Additional funds for research projects will also be made available.

### **Summary**

As the university approaches the new millennium, the future of Brigham Young University holds great promise. The link between the Church and the university will become stronger than ever. Church growth will continue to be a catalyst pushing us forward in the academic world. The uniqueness of the university with its dual mission of academic and spiritual development will enhance the university's standing in relation to its sister institutions—academically and otherwise. The number of faculty recognized internationally will grow exponentially. The number of

graduates receiving honors from the outside world will increase in like manner.

In all sincerity I cannot think of a better time to be at Brigham Young University. The Lord is directing its course. We are beginning to scale the mountains in front of us, but there are many more to climb. (See Spencer W. Kimball, "Climbing the Hills Just Ahead: Three Addresses," *Educating Zion*, eds. John W. Welch and Don E. Norton [Provo: BYU Studies, 1996], p. 77.) May the Lord bless us as we lay our gifts on the altar is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.