

Lost Horizons

JAMES E. FAUST

President Oaks, members of the faculty, my beloved and choice young friends: I am grateful for the presence of the most important person in my life. I know that it's not appropriate to brag about your relatives, but I'm not related to her; I'm just married to her.

I have a desire this morning to be objective in what I say to you, and I think, in my desire to be objective, I also have a concern that I might not be invited back again to speak to you. I have not been privileged to attend this great institution, which memorializes the name of Brigham Young, but my interest in and concern for this university and its students are very great; and if BYU is going to be worthy of its name, it has the responsibility to expand the horizons of all who attend this institution, for Brigham Young himself was a man of endless vision. There is currently a rerun of the movie called *Lost Horizon*. If I can, I should like to challenge those who attend this institution to broaden their vision, rather than to limit it, so that there might be no lost horizons for any of the graduates of this great university.

Every time I go into the President's room at the Hotel Utah, which, as you know, contains the pictures of all of the presidents of the Church, there is a remarkable likeness of Brigham Young looking down from the wall.

He always seems to be saying to me, "What are you doing here?"—a question which might appropriately be asked of those of you who are attending BYU. What are you doing here? This great school and its unique faculty are not really on trial, for they have stood the tests of time and excellence; but the students who attend here will be evaluated more and longer than any students who attend any other institution in this state or any other state. This is so because the Spirit of the Lord is here, and therefore it should reflect in the quality of the lives of those who attend here.

Two Divergent Reactions to BYU

I have wondered if the great honor of graduating from this institution, named after the great visionary colonizer, has had too much of a tendency to limit the horizons of a small number of those who attend, simply because they have felt that graduation was the crowning achievement of their lives. I'm sure that it is unfairly categorized, and I certainly do not

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wish to do so, but there are at least two divergent reactions which seem to obtain in some who attend this university. The first reaction can be seen in those few who, after graduation or leaving this institution, seem to feel that they cannot or do not wish to perpetuate in their lives the high ideals and standards of this university and of the Church which supports it. There are some of those in the law school which I attended, who have turned out to be good lawyers and otherwise good men but are spiritually inactive and have therefore limited their horizons.

The next category consists of those few at the opposite end of the spectrum who project the feeling, either consciously or unconsciously, that, simply because they have attended this university, somehow they have achieved, have arrived, and are fully satisfied with their achievements, as well as being a little self-righteous therefore, and whose vision has been limited and many horizons unseen. There must never be a lack of inner vision in the students or an inadequate challenge by the faculty at this university. Elder Hugh B. Brown reminds us, "If you have a desire to be mediocre, you will probably find that you have already achieved your ambition." Everyone would probably agree that most of the students at Brigham Young University are on the right track, but Arthur Godfrey has said, "Even if you're on the right track, you will get run over if you just stand there."

An Understanding Heart

Having recently come into the body of your leaders, I have a persuasion that the Brethren have been called, not because of their great intellects, although many have such, or their vast experience, although most have such, or their great learning, and all are learned according to the standards of the world. Based on their treatment of me, I am persuaded that in a large measure they have been called because of the understanding of their hearts. In this

area they are not wanting. The Lord has made it clear that he requires an understanding heart and a willing mind. It is to be hoped that at this great University, while cultural and intellectual pursuits take their proper place, the feelings of the heart will be included in the curriculum and therefore not become one of the lost horizons.

Overcome Adversity with Work

Rossiter Raymond has said that "a horizon is nothing save the limit of our sight," and unfortunately the first range of hills which encircle the scanty vale is the horizon for the majority of its inhabitants. Heslop wisely counseled, "Don't always look at the objects which are near and never on the horizon." A thoughtful woman, Phoebe Cary, reminds us, "An inner vision, quick to find the beauties hidden from common sight," ought also to be part of the bill of fare of this university.

One of my friends, whom you would know if I should name him, recently had a son graduate from Harvard University. His other son has an advanced degree from Stanford. My friend began his illustrious career as a paperboy of one of the great newspapers, of which he is now the president, and subsequent to his having been a paperboy he worked for one of the big railroads. He has had all of the advantage of knowing the blessings of adversity. I queried him with a sincere pondering: "I wonder if your sons are as well educated as you were at their age?" I myself am very grateful to a father who did not overindulge his sons except with love and moral support. I think I have a special appreciation for many things, because of having worked at a canning factory in Murray and having caught hot cans as they came from the capper—for the munificent sum of twenty-five cents per hour. One of the fringe benefits of that job was to have the flesh of the hands peel off because of the wet and the heat of the cans. It also involved a ten-mile bike ride every day to get to and from work.

There is in the Church today a truly remarkable family. They are the children of Patriarch and Sister Alexander R. Curtis, who used to run a coal yard in Sugarhouse. To my knowledge, no family in the Church has produced so many bishops, stake presidents, mission presidents, and regional representatives of the Twelve. There are presently three sons serving as regional representatives of the Twelve. One of them, President A. Ray Curtis, when asked to what he attributed his success, answered that it was the coal shovel his father put in his hands when he was a boy.

There are some advantages if you have to work and struggle and deny yourselves here at Brigham Young University. It may very well be that the most beneficial part of your college education is to learn to work. You will find that in time you will outstrip those other students who will arrive on this campus next week or next month driving a Thunderbird their parents have bought for them. We are indebted to Henry Ward Beecher for the marvelous thought that "affliction comes to us all, not to make us sad, but sober; not to make us sorry, but wise. It is trial that proves one thing weak and another strong. A cobweb is as good as the mightiest cable when there is no strain upon it."

Excellence

One of the marvels of the surpassing craftsmanship so evident in so many places in the Salt Lake Temple makes one wonder if one of the lost horizons in your day is not a loss of excellence in personal performance. Paul counseled the Philippians well: "Approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ" (Philippians 1:10). The challenge to follow a more excellent way appears in two more significant scriptures. In Paul's writings to the Corinthians he says, "Covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way" (1 Corinthians 12:31). In Ether, the challenge is more spiritual: "In the gift of his Son

hath God prepared a more excellent way" (Ether 12:11). One takes no offense in the pride of Michelangelo, who carved across the bodice of the *Pietà* this reminder to all who gaze upon this exquisite and sublime work of art: "Michelangelo Buonarroti of Florence made this."

Stradivarius too had a working knowledge of excellence. One of the horizons which profitably can be expanded in all of us is spiritual excellence. I would surmise that all who attend this great institution have a desire to see the face of the Savior. This is an available blessing, for he has said, "It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am" (D&C 93:1).

Another lost horizon of spiritual excellence is that of a want of personal integrity, or just plain honesty in one's dealings. A knowledge and practice of first-rate honesty is far more important than a knowledge of logarithms or the periodic tables of the elements of the earth. It would be hoped that first-rate honesty would be one of the principles taught constantly at this institution of higher learning. The element of honesty in fine test is that of being true to one's own being. Shakespeare, speaking through Polonius, said:

This above all: to thine own self be true, And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man. [Hamlet, I.iii].

Confidence

May I mention briefly three other horizons, which hopefully are never lost in the individual students at Brigham Young University. First is confidence in yourselves. Recently one of the Twelve with some others sat in a group of former recipients of a special scholarship of the universities of this state. Each recounted what the scholarship had meant in his or her life.

Invariably appreciation was expressed for the money itself, because, I'm sure, of the great need. But quite often appreciation was also expressed for the self-confidence it gave to the recipient. Excellence comes into being, riding on the confidence one has in oneself.

Physical Soundness

Another lost horizon may be in physical soundness. More than a strengthening of muscles, there comes a strengthening of resolve, self-discipline, and carriage in participating in athletic endeavors. My brother Gus and I occasionally had to walk five miles from Granite High School to Cottonwood where we lived, after having participated in a scrimmage or training for a track meet. To many, including my own children, this seems not only foolish but downright stupid, and as I look back on it I have some misgivings myself. But there was a certain satisfaction in having persevered in an overwhelming physical challenge.

Service

The last horizon, which hopefully is never lost in our lives, is that of service. I speak of service to your family and to others, service to your calling, service to your profession, service to your community and your country. Most of the expanding horizons of all of us involve service and dedication. I humbly challenge all to remember that mere attendance at Brigham Young University, or for that matter Harvard University or the University of Utah, is not a substitute for excellence or endeavor. There is an unquestioned mark of distinction in being part of the student body of this great institution, but equating mere admission at Brigham Young University with achievement is an improper equation.

A Journey, Not a Destination

One of my beloved uncles went on a mission in 1912–14 to an enlightened nation in Europe. He found great satisfaction and

fulfillment in being part of the great missionary activity and in his involvement with the Saints. After his mission he remained very loyal to the Church but became somewhat inactive because he had a Word of Wisdom problem. My brothers and I used to thrill in hearing him tell about his mission. He would tell us by the hour about his mission president, his companions, the Saints, the country, and its culture. His mission was, in many ways, the highwater mark of his life. He was thrilled when we went on our missions. He treasured missionary experience; it became the destination of his life rather than a journey.

An appropriate question to ask youth is whether your attendance at Brigham Young University is your destination or whether it is part of your eternal journey. In World War II we flew over the oases of the great Sahara Desert. Often we were low enough to the sand to see the drovers guiding their lumbering camels to and from these sanctuaries from thirst. In a measure, this great university and its environment is an oasis in the real world. As at an oasis in the desert, there should be those pilgrims who are coming from the real world to this campus and leaving this campus again to go back into the real world, even to distant lands. Members of this Church should be the leaven of the world, and if we are therefore not out in the world how can we provide the yeast? I am told that a few recruiters may be boycotting Brigham Young University because its graduates and/or their wives do not want to leave the oasis, or, having left it, always want to return. One of the mottoes of this university is "The world is our campus." If the world is our campus, then should not the world also be our area of influence? Alma reminds us that "the Lord doth grant unto all nations, of their own nation and tongue, to teach his word, . . . all that he seeth fit that they should have" (Alma 29:8). This must be constantly kept in mind by the students and the graduates of this university.

We are not saved by the role we play in life or by the geographic area where we live. The word of the Lord came unto Jonah saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh" (Jonah 1:2). There will be many of you who should go to Nineveh. You will recall that Jonah recoiled from that idea and went to Joppa, to go on to Tarshish, to get away from the presence of the Lord. And wherever your Nineveh may be, you will find that the presence of the Lord will be there. Jonah found that the Lord had other ideas for him, and three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish which swallowed him changed his mind about a number of things.

I bear my testimony to the divinity of the work which caused this great institution to be founded and to flourish, and to the reality of Jesus of Nazareth, our divine Redeemer, who should be our constant companion in the classrooms and assemblies, and even when we walk on the paths of Brigham Young University. And because of his influence on this campus, I pray that all who pause at this great oasis may have truly expanded horizons in their lives, and that he whose life we seek to emulate will be our continuing model. I humbly pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.