



BYU President Merrill J. Bateman at a BYU devotional, January 1996. Courtesy Mark A. Philbrick/BYU.

Learning in Zion: Two Addresses

Merrill J. Bateman

I. Secular Learning in a Spiritual Environment

Twenty-five years ago, I arrived on the campus of Brigham Young University as a newly recruited economics professor. I had received a Ph.D. from one of the more respected graduate programs in the country, completed my military obligation, and was now embarking on an academic career. A few months later, I received a telephone call from a faculty member in another department. The person introduced himself, welcomed me to campus, and then asked if I would answer some questions from a survey he was taking. Although I was somewhat surprised by the call, I agreed. He then asked, "What brand of economics do you teach? Do you subscribe to increased governmental controls for the United States economy? Do sacred truths have any relevance in economic modeling, and do they influence your teaching in the classroom?"

My graduate training helped me answer the first two questions, but I confess that I had trouble with the third. My graduate training had emphasized that the well-being of a nation depends on freedom to trade, freedom to choose, information flows, the development of technology, and the specialization of the factors of production. I also knew that the most efficient combinations of the above require free markets. When government controls are imposed, market signals are disturbed, and efficiency is reduced, causing a reduction of goods and services. Consequently, I understood that capitalism was a much more productive system than socialism or communism. On the other hand, I understood some economists' concerns regarding capitalism. Some economists believe that capitalism leads to a severely skewed distribution of income. Some

members in a free market society may be wealthy while others starve. Advocates of socialism and other forms of market control defend governmental interference on the grounds that income will be more equitable. They argue that inequality is too high a price to pay for an efficient system. Many economists consider efficiency and equity to be mutually exclusive goals.

At that time, such equity arguments concerned me, but I felt strongly that the costs of a socialistic system were too high. Evidence is even clearer today that the loss of economic freedom also brings the loss of political and religious freedoms. In such an economic system, skewed incomes continue, only at a much lower level. But the idea that a sacred truth or principle might resolve the conflict between efficiency and equity had never entered my classroom presentations.

Although the caller's questions might have been asked in a friendlier atmosphere, I have been grateful these many years that the questions were asked and that the last one was disconcerting to me. It forced me to think about the relationship between secular and sacred truths. I noticed that I had compartmentalized my search for secular truth apart from my search for spiritual understanding. Until then, the processes seemed separate and distinct. I had asked the Lord to help me master secular material as I approached examinations as a student and as I entered the classroom as a teacher. But I had never thought about receiving new economic insights as a result of combining scientific and spiritual methods of searching. Did the Lord's instructions to Oliver Cowdery to "study it out in your mind, then . . . ask me if it be right" (D&C 9:8) apply to secular as well as spiritual truth? Was it possible to extend Alma's injunction to "cry . . . in your fields, yea, over all your flocks" (Alma 34:20) to include economic knowledge? After all, economics was my field. Could a spiritual environment increase the rate of learning and the probability of discovering new secular truths? Are secular truths related to spiritual truths? What are the laws governing the acquisition of knowledge and intelligence? What constitutes a spiritual environment? Is it within each person? In one's search for secular truth, what happens if one abides the conditions that enhance the search for sacred truths? Could spiritual truth resolve secular paradoxes? These and other questions flooded my mind over the years and provide the basis for my presentation.

What Is Truth--Absolute or Relative?

The Lord told Joseph Smith that "truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come" (D&C 93:24). The Lord further revealed that "truth abideth and hath no end" (D&C 88:66) and "intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be" (D&C 93:29). If truth is a statement of reality, if truth abides and has no end, and if the manifestation of truth (intelligence) was not created or made, then truth is eternal. There are absolute truths!

As President Spencer W. Kimball taught in a 1977 Brigham Young University devotional:

There are . . . absolute truths which are the same yesterday, today, and forever--never changing. These absolute truths are not altered by the opinions of men. . . . We learn about these absolute truths by being taught by the Spirit. These truths are "independent" in their spiritual sphere and are to be discovered spiritually, though they may be confirmed by experience and intellect (see D&C 93:30). . . . God our Heavenly Father--Elohim--lives. That is an absolute truth. All . . . of the children of men on the earth might be ignorant of him and his attributes and his powers, but he still lives. All the people on the earth might deny him and disbelieve, but he lives in spite of them. . . . And Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Almighty, the Creator, the Master of the only true way of life--the gospel of Jesus Christ. . . . That is an absolute truth; there is no gainsaying.¹

God placed truths in different spheres, as the scriptures indicate. As a consequence, there are the sacred truths of the gospel, but also there are truths of mathematics, physics, chemistry, the social sciences, and so on. These secular laws or principles describe the workings of this world. In the search for absolute truth, science often is not able to observe all data or appreciate all the relationships involved. Consequently, scientific discoveries may approach the threshold of truth but not lay claim on the whole truth. Therefore, discovered "truths" are subject to change. This is relative knowledge. Relative knowledge is an approximation of reality or statements based on incomplete information. When scientists attempt to discover truth in the secular realm, they formulate a hypothesis that relates causes and effects, gather data, and then test the hypothesis. In experiments conducted to determine the accuracy of the hypothesis, scientists invariably add an error term to their models to represent the unknown factors or influences that may have been omitted from the hypothesis. If the test reveals a small error term, scientists will have more confidence in the "truth" they are trying to establish. However, the error term rarely equals zero, which would imply the discovery of an absolute truth. If the error term is large, the hypothesis is normally rejected, and scientists reformulate the hypothesis and begin the testing procedure again.

All absolute truth is consistent. In the Lord's words, "truth embraceth truth," and "light cleaveth unto light" (D&C 88:40). When a scientist uses secular methods to discover law that appears to be inconsistent with gospel truths, I suggest that not all truth about the earthly law is known. What appears to be inconsistent in two or three dimensions as discovered by the scientist will be harmonized eventually by additional knowledge in "n" dimensions. Spiritual truth forms a continuum with gospel truths at the higher end of the scale. Knowledge of and obedience to gospel truths are critical for salvation, but all truth is useful and important for mankind. The application of secular truth produces the benefits of faster transportation, more efficient communication methods, time-saving devices, etc. If wisely used, scientific truth will improve humans' health and well-being and will aid the Lord's servants in spreading the gospel.

But all truth, both relative and absolute, is spiritual. As the Lord explains, "All things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law [truth] which was temporal" (D&C 29:34). Since all truth is spiritual, the conditions and process for discovering "secular" truth must be similar to the requirements established by the Lord for understanding revealed truth. What are the Lord's conditions for obtaining knowledge and intelligence, and do they apply to secular learning?

The Lord's Requirements for Discovering Gospel Truths

Two principles govern the acquisition of truth and intelligence. They are diligence and obedience (compare Alma 12:9). Diligence may be defined as energetic application or mental exertion. The scriptures declare:

Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection. And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come. (D&C 130:1819)

In the gospel context, faith requires diligence. Joseph Smith expounded, "When a man works by faith he works by mental exertion instead of physical force."² Diligence is one of the laws of heaven that determines the knowledge and intelligence that may be acquired by the earnest truth seeker. Will God bless people disproportionately to their mental effort or faith? No! That would

violate an eternal principle. Learning by faith is not an easy road or a lazy means to gaining understanding.

Obedience is the second requirement for finding truth. In a gospel context, obedience brings faith. A new investigator of the gospel must act on the desire to believe by planting the seed, repenting, studying, and seeking the Lord in prayer. Because gospel truths are of a high spiritual order, they are confirmed through the Holy Spirit. In order to receive a witness from the Holy Ghost regarding the truthfulness of gospel principles, one must be striving to live in accordance with gospel truths. One must be living up to the light that is within oneself. This is consistent with Paul's teaching:

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. (1 Cor. 2:9-11)

The Principles of Diligence and Obedience Apply to the Discovery of Secular Truth

Again, all truth is spiritual in nature, revealed through the light of Christ. This is the light that "lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9) and is

the same light that quickeneth your understandings; Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space--The light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed. (D&C 88:11-13)

As President N. Eldon Tanner taught in general conference, "We learn from the scriptures that all truth is revealed through the light of Christ. . . . Thus, the truths discovered by such men as Sir Isaac Newton, Thomas Edison, and Albert Einstein were actually revealed to them through the light of Christ."³

Because all truth comes through the light of Christ, seekers of secular truth must follow the Lord's requirements for discovering gospel truths. Diligence or mental exertion is one of the requirements that must be followed by seekers of secular truth. Scientists study the problem, saturate their minds with it, puzzle over it, and dream about it. Albert Sabin and Jonas Salk spent years searching for a vaccine to immunize people from contracting poliomyelitis. A reporter wrote that once Sabin focused on a problem, he was tenacious and would not let go. He had a voracious appetite for work--for mental exertion.⁴

What about obedience? What is the level of obedience required for the discovery of secular truth? Again, the answer is that everyone must live according to the light they have. When one is seeking a witness of gospel truth and is being taught those truths, one must plant the seed of faith and live according to the higher truths. When one is seeking secular truth, the revealer is the light of the "spirit of man" (1 Cor. 2:11). Thus the scientist must be striving to live according to the light within him so that new light will cleave to the old. Generally the obedience required in receiving secular truth is of a terrestrial order.

To illustrate the role of the light of Christ, consider the common description of many secular discoveries. After studying, puzzling, and dreaming about the problem, the scientist often finds progress stopped, blocked by a seemingly impenetrable wall. Then at last and suddenly, as if out of nowhere, comes a flash of light, the answer to his quest. Recall James W. Cannon's

explanation regarding his discovery of how to unknot an infinitely knotted object in high dimensional space--a topology problem in mathematics. After pushing the problem around for many difficult weeks, the solution came:

One night at 2:00 a.m., my eyes suddenly popped open.

I sat up in bed. . . . I knew how to extend *Stan'ko's techniques [a solution to the infinitely knotted object]. I do not know how the answer came to me. I couldn't sleep.

I dressed quietly and went walking on the dark streets of Madison. . . . I checked the ideas for all of their consequences. I checked for absurdities. I couldn't find any. The picture was wonderful.⁵

Parley P. Pratt, one of the original twelve Apostles in this dispensation, explained the spiritual reasons for such inspiration:

When the outward organs of thought and perception are released from their activity, the nerves unstrung, and the whole of mortal humanity lies hushed in quiet slumbers, in order to renew its strength and vigor, it is then that the spiritual organs are at liberty, in a certain degree, to assume their wonted functions, to recall some faint outlines, some confused and half-defined recollections, of that heavenly world, and those endearing scenes of their former estate, from which they have descended in order to obtain and mature a tabernacle of flesh. . . . Spirit communes with spirit, thought meets thought, soul blends with soul, in all the raptures of mutual, pure, and eternal love.⁶

In addition to flashes of insight and the usual procedures of study, observation, and experimentation, truth even comes by accident. Aspartame, the nonnutritive sweetener known as Nutrasweet, was discovered by a chemist in a lab when he accidentally allowed a kettle of amino acids mixed with an enzyme to boil over. In cleaning up the mess, the solution got on his hands and fingers. A short time later, he rubbed his lips with his fingers and noticed a sweet taste.⁷ Today, Nutrasweet is a multibillion dollar product.

Given that learning can take place both through study and faith, is Brigham Young University destined to be a leader among the world's institutions of higher learning in discovering secular truth as well as disseminating sacred truth? To the extent that this institution lives up to its mandate of providing a spiritual environment in which learning can take place, the answer is yes.

Spiritual Environment and Secular Learning

I define a spiritual environment as a place inhabited by people committed to living gospel truths. The community members are peculiar in that they are sensitive to spiritual things. They have access to the Holy Spirit because of their faith and works. Their faith is based on a spiritual witness that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world and that he restored the Father's plan of salvation through the prophet Joseph Smith. Their faith is more than a testimony of belief; it is a force that propels them to action and provides them with power.

The members of this community are a consecrated people in that they bend their will to that of the Father's. Little disputation exists among them, and unity abounds. They understand that contention is not of Christ, but of Satan, who uses it to stir people to anger one with another. A spiritual environment is a place where respect for others is dominant, where people are honest, supportive, and slow to criticize, and where scholars need not fear the motives of their colleagues. Because of faith, scholars do not fear the world. They want to learn from others--both inside and outside of their institution. However, their faith and knowledge of higher truths allow them to sift through secular ideas searching for consistency--for truth which embraces truth. Their faith also provides them with the patience to wait for additional knowledge when secular truth conflicts with eternal truth. The atmosphere which pervades the campus originates within each person. It reflects the quality of life lived by each inhabitant.

In this environment, the words of President Marion G. Romney will be proven:

I believe in study. I believe that men learn much through study. As a matter of fact, it has been my observation that they learn little concerning things as they are, as they were, or as they are to come without study. I also believe, however, and know, that learning by study is greatly accelerated by faith.⁸

If faith dominates the environment of this university, then secular learning will be enhanced. One should remember, however, that learning by faith depends on the principles of diligence and obedience. These principles are especially important in a spiritual environment because of the higher knowledge given. But when the principles are applied, scholars will link their mental searching with faith, and discoveries will increase in frequency. I believe this process is well underway at Brigham Young University and will grow at a geometric rate. Both faculty and students are participating in this process, as reflected in the major innovations and knowledge that have come from the University in the last two decades. Surely, Brigham Young University will be one of the means by which the Lord uses Abraham's seed to bless the nations of the earth.

Integration of Truth

Let me provide two examples of how the Lord's principles for gaining spiritual truth can enhance the search for secular truth. The first is an example of a spiritual truth which solves the economic paradox of efficiency and equity. The second is an insight I received a few weeks ago that integrated one spiritual truth with another and allows me to bear witness of him whom we all serve.

For the first insight, I am indebted to Lindon J. Robison, who has published an article entitled "Economic Insights from the Book of Mormon."⁹ Robison points out that righteousness, including caring for others, is the solution to the conflict between economic equity and efficiency. He draws on the lessons taught in the Book of Mormon to illustrate that economic development occurs in a society when people are righteous and care about each other. Economic decline occurs when a nation falls into iniquity and the people become hardhearted and full of pride. When there is righteousness and caring, there is also unity and cooperation. Good feelings among people and nations allow for and increase trading activities. Trading allows workers to specialize and to share new technology.¹⁰ Moreover, when righteous people control the government (for example, King Benjamin and his son Mosiah), there is more freedom of choice and taxes are less burdensome. When the less caring take control (like King Noah), the tax burden increases.¹¹

Contrast the trading and specialization that occurred among the righteous people of Lib with the life-style of the wicked Jaredites. First, the story of Lib's people:

And they were exceedingly industrious, and they did buy and sell and traffic one with another, that they might get gain. And they did work in all manner of ore, and they did make gold, and silver, and iron, and brass, and all manner of metals; . . . and they did have silks, and fine-twined linen; and they did work all manner of cloth. (Ether 10:2224; italics added)

Now compare Lib's people with the Jaredites, whose wickedness caused their society to disintegrate:

Wherefore every man did cleave unto that which was his own, with his hands, and would not borrow neither would he lend; and every man kept the hilt of his sword in his right hand, in the defence of his property and his own life and of his wives and children. (Ether 14:2; italics added)

Professor Robison concludes that the supposed equity and efficiency paradox of modern economic theory is not supported. In fact, economic prosperity appears to be a companion of equity. He notes:

The Book of Mormon message is that the distribution of income is based on the level of caring and unity among the people. Among the righteous, income is evenly distributed as are opportunities to progress. The distribution of income is simply a reflection of their unity. . . . By voluntarily redistributing their income to the poor, they were able to maintain an economic system that included incentives to work hard because of individual responsibility and rewards for efforts. Moreover, one of the reasons the caring work hard is that they desire to use the product of their work to bless the lives of others.¹²

By applying diligence and obedience to a sacred text revealed by the Lord, Professor Robison has gained truth that solves an important secular problem.

Finally, may I share an experience that occurred at a stake conference I attended as a visiting authority. This experience illustrates the integration of one spiritual truth with another. It was the Saturday evening session (they are almost always the best). The theme was "Keeping the Sabbath Day Holy." As I waited to give my talk, I felt prompted to tell a story my wife had recently shared with me. But I was uneasy because the story did not seem to connect with the theme. Because of the seeming inconsistency, I decided to ignore the prompting. But the prompting came again with more intensity. I asked myself, "How can the story of a little handicapped girl relate to keeping the Sabbath day holy?" And then a thought came, "Why do we celebrate the Sabbath?"

I wrestled with the last question and eventually discovered two answers. The first is that we keep the Sabbath day to celebrate the creation of this earth. The Lord set aside the seventh day to honor the fulfillment of a promise he made to his children that he would create an earth or second estate where they could come and progress. And then another thought pressed upon my mind. The Sabbath day was changed from Saturday to Sunday following the crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Christ. The change was effected to honor God's fulfillment of a second covenant--providing a Savior to open the door for us to return to his presence. Moreover, a meal was instituted and scheduled for each Sabbath day to remind us of those events.

As I used my mental faculties to reflect on the Savior's atonement, I then understood my initial prompting and how Heather's story is consistent with honoring the Sabbath day.

Heather was born into an LDS family sometime in the late 1970s. A short time after the birth, her parents learned that she was physically handicapped and that her spirit would be housed in a body with great restrictions. As she grew, she was confined to a wheelchair, was unable to speak, and could send messages only with her eyes. A direct gaze with a widening of her eyes and a smile meant yes. A blink meant no. In spite of her handicaps, however, one could feel her vibrant spirit inside.

When old enough, Heather began to attend school, where her teacher was a therapist. One morning as Heather and the teacher visited about the prior weekend, the teacher learned that Heather had attended Primary on Sunday. The teacher then sang for Heather the Primary song "I Wonder When He Comes Again." The expression on Heather's face revealed the delight within her. When the song was finished, the teacher could tell that Heather wanted her to continue. After a few songs, the teacher asked Heather if she had a favorite song. Heather's direct gaze provided the answer and offered a challenge. Through a series of questions, the teacher learned that Heather's song was one she had heard in Primary. She wasn't sure which songbook it was in, but it was about Jesus. The teacher then sang every possible song she could think of.

Unfortunately Heather's favorite did not appear, and Heather was not about to quit. For some reason, she needed to share her favorite song.

At the end of the day, the two were still unsuccessful, and the teacher agreed to bring a Primary songbook to school the next day. On the following day, the teacher and student went through all of the songs in the book, but to no avail. Finally, the teacher suggested that Heather's mother might help her figure out which song it was. Heather came to school the next day with the new Church hymnbook tucked in her wheelchair. The teacher positioned herself next to Heather and, page by page, began making their way through the book, singing the first phrase of each song. Page after page, Heather's eyes would close in a definite no. Finally, halfway through the book, the teacher began to sing: "There is sunshine in my soul today . . ." Immediately, the little girl brightened and smiled. She looked directly at the teacher, and both began to laugh and rejoice. Success had finally come after a three-day search. As the teacher sang the first verse and began the chorus, Heather mustered all her effort and joined in with occasional sigh-like sounds. After finishing the first verse and chorus, the teacher asked if she wanted to hear the rest of the verses. Heather's eyes opened wide with a firm yes. Again the teacher began:

There is music in my soul today,
A carol to my King,
And Jesus listening can hear
The songs I cannot sing . . .¹³

The little girl's reaction to the third and fourth lines was so strong that the teacher stopped. As the reality and significance of the words pressed on the teacher's mind, she asked Heather if those lines were what she liked about the song. Could Jesus, listening, hear the songs she could not sing? Heather looked the teacher directly in the eyes, and testimony was borne.

Feeling guided by the Spirit, the teacher asked, "Heather, does Jesus talk to you in your mind and in your heart?" The child's look was penetrating. The teacher then asked, "Heather, what does he say?" The teacher's heart pounded as she saw the clear look in Heather's eyes as the little girl awaited the questions which would allow her to share her insights. The teacher then asked, "Does he say, 'Heather, I love you'?" Her radiant eyes widened. The teacher paused and then said, "Does he say, 'Heather, you're special'?" Again, yes. Finally, after a pause, the teacher asked, "Does he say, 'Heather, be patient; I have great things in store for you'?" Heather's head became erect; every fiber of her being seemed electrified as her eyes penetrated the teacher's soul. She knew she was loved; she knew she was special; she knew she only needed to be patient because great things were in store for her.¹⁴

Heather's story helped me to understand why we are asked to keep the Sabbath day holy. Through the Atonement, Jesus can hear the songs we cannot sing and has great things in store for us if we are patient. The Sabbath is a special day to remember his great gift to us.

May the Lord bless you in your search for both sacred and secular truth. May all of us honor him by being diligent and obedient in our efforts to learn and to serve him.

II. A Zion University

For many years, I have been observing the great miracle the Lord is performing on this earth as he builds a Zion people in country after country. In July 1956, I traveled by train and ship from Salt Lake City to London, England, to begin a mission for the Church. Upon arrival I learned that approximately 15,000 members lived in Great Britain in fifteen districts. There were

no stakes. In fact, the number of stakes in the entire Church totaled only 239, and all but twelve were in the western United States and Canada. Upon completion of the mission two years later, there were sixteen districts in Great Britain but still no concentration of Saints large enough to organize a stake. In 1971, I returned as an employee of an American company. A few stakes existed in the British Isles by then, but the bulk of the Saints were still scattered and met in small congregations. My family lived in a tiny branch thirty-five miles west of London. The attendance at our first sacrament meeting was fourteen, including my family of seven. We met in a small schoolhouse with many members driving fifteen or more miles to attend. Twenty-three years have passed since our family returned from England, and the small seeds planted by missionaries and others after World War II have turned into a miracle. Two years ago, I returned to Britain on Church business and learned that more than forty stakes now exist in the British Isles.

Membership exceeds 166,000.

Since my call as a General Authority in 1992, I have learned that the British experience is not unique. As late as 1966, there was only one stake in Brazil. On a recent trip to São Paulo, the Area Presidency informed us that the 150th stake would be created by the end of 1995, with Brazilian membership exceeding one-half million. The growth in Chile, Argentina, Peru, Mexico, and the Philippines is similar to that of Brazil. In early 1970, there were no stakes in Japan. Today there are twenty-five. Korea's first stake was created in 1973. Today there are sixteen. In 1978, following the priesthood revelation, I was called by President James E. Faust, then president of the Church's International Mission, to accompany Elder Ted Cannon on a fact-finding mission through West Africa. Although numerous groups of people in Ghana and Nigeria expressed interest in the Church at the time, total membership was less than one hundred. West African membership today totals more than 70,000, and stakes exist throughout the region.

The prophets Daniel and Isaiah saw this phenomenon happening in the last days. Daniel stated:

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. (Dan. 2:44)

Isaiah likened the Church to a tent and said that in the last days it would stretch forth across the earth by lengthening its cords and strengthening its stakes (see Isa. 54:2).

How is this done? How are people's hearts and minds changed so that conviction and commitment exist in their souls? What role does Brigham Young University play in this marvelous venture? With regard to the transformation occurring in the hearts of men and women, I have learned that the great miracle of the Church is based on thousands and thousands of small, quiet miracles. May I illustrate with two examples.

Four weeks prior to Elder Cannon's and my trip to West Africa in July 1978, fifty letters were sent to members and nonmembers in the various countries apprising them of our visit and asking them to meet us at the airport upon arrival. During a four-week period, we visited eight cities in four countries. With the exception of one city, no one received a letter in time to meet us. Toward the end of the trip, we arrived in Calabar, Nigeria, on a Friday afternoon, needing the services of a previously identified member to help us find approximately fifteen congregations in the southeastern part of the country. Each congregation had adopted the name of our Church, and the leaders had written asking for information and missionaries.

The member, Ime Eduok, was not at the airport or at the hotel. Brother Cannon and I checked in and went to our room not knowing where or how to find Brother Eduok in a city of one

million. The next two days were a critical part of the trip, and Brother Eduok was the only one who could help us. We knelt in prayer and asked the Lord to guide us to him. We returned to the lobby and asked the desk clerk if she knew Mr. Eduok. She did not. Within a few minutes, a large number of Nigerians had gathered around us discussing our plight but lacking the information needed. Suddenly, I felt a hand on my shoulder. I turned to see a large man standing next to me who said, "Did I hear you say Ime Eduok? He is my employee. I just entered the hotel to buy a newspaper on my way home from work. Ime will be leaving the firm in fifteen minutes. I do not know where he lives. If he leaves the office before you arrive, it is unlikely that you will find him before Monday." The man hurriedly put us in a taxi and gave the driver directions. We arrived at the business just as Ime Eduok was locking the door. Brother Eduok guided us to each congregation during the Saturday and Sunday that followed. Many people in those congregations are now members of the Church, and information gleaned from them formed an important part of the report given to the First Presidency upon our return.

The second incident comes from a story told by Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve.

[A] beautiful young mother named Svetlana [living in Leningrad, Russia] had importuned the Lord in prayer to make it possible for her to obtain a Bible written in the Russian language. Such a Bible [was] rare, precious, and very expensive. In the fall of 1989, she and her [family] went to Helsinki in quest [of] a Bible. While walking through a park in Helsinki, she stepped upon an object hidden beneath the ground cover of autumn leaves. She picked it up and found it to be the answer to her prayers.

It was a Bible written in the Russian language. So excited was she that she joyfully recounted the story of this great discovery to another mother who was also in the park with her youngster. The second mother then [asked] Svetlana, "Would you like to have another book about Jesus Christ, also written in the Russian language?" Svetlana . . . answered in the affirmative.

The Finnish woman, wife of a district president, provided Svetlana with a copy of the Book of Mormon and invited her to church. Svetlana took the missionary lessons, joined the Church, and returned to Leningrad with her family. She then invited friends into her home, and many of them responded to the message of the missionaries and were baptized.¹⁵ Svetlana, her friends, and others like them are the pioneer foundation upon which the Church has been built in that part of the world.

Why was a Nigerian with vital information prompted to deviate from his normal course and stop at a hotel to buy a newspaper? How did a rare, expensive Russian Bible find its way into a Finnish park, coincident with the passage of a Russian woman who had been praying for such a book? How did the wife of a Finnish district president just happen to be in the park to share in the joy of the rare prize? Brothers and sisters, who is guiding the Church? We live in a day when hundreds of thousands of small miracles are quietly occurring as the Lord prepares the honest in heart for entrance into his kingdom and the earth for his return. What role does Brigham Young University play in this process? The answer depends on our testimonies and how we view the university in its relationship to the Church.

Apart From or a Part of the Church

Is the university apart from or a part of the Church? Following the announcement of my appointment as president of Brigham Young University, the Salt Lake Tribune carried an article on what it means to have a General Authority as the school's leader. The major point of the

article concerned the University's relationship to the Church. The news reporter suggested that although some might have assumed prior to the announcement that the university was a secular institution distinct from but reporting to the Church, the call clearly indicates that the University is an integral part of the kingdom. The article surprised me in that I had never thought of Brigham Young University separate from the Church. Prophet after prophet has stated clearly that Brigham Young University is a religious institution with a divine mission, even though secular education is a key part of its purpose. Given the organizational structure by which the University is governed, it seems paradoxical that some might think that Brigham Young University is not an integral part of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Church itself is an educational institution, and Brigham Young University is one of its key components. Thus, one might say that this institution is not only a university in Zion, but is in the process of becoming a "Zion university."

From the very beginning, education has been one of the central missions of the Church. The School of the Prophets established in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1833 foreshadowed the creation of the University of the City of Nauvoo in 1841. The purpose of the Nauvoo school, as stated by the Prophet Joseph Smith and his counselors, was

to teach our children wisdom, to instruct them in all the knowledge and learning, in the arts, sciences, and learned professions. We hope to make this institution one of the great lights of the world, and by and through it to diffuse that kind of knowledge which will be . . . for the public good, and also for private and individual happiness.¹⁶

The Prophet Joseph's dream to build a university that would become a light to the world was cut short by a mob's bullet on June 27, 1844. But the dream burned deeply inside another prophet. Brigham Young taught, "Ours is a religion of improvement,"¹⁷ and "every art and science known and studied by the children of men is comprised within the Gospel."¹⁸

In February 1850, only two and one-half years after the first wagon train entered the Salt Lake Valley, the Latter-day Saints created the University of Deseret, the first institution of higher learning west of the Mississippi and a testimony to the value placed on education by the Saints. Brigham Young University was founded in 1875 by the prophet whose name it bears. It has become the flagship of the Church's educational system. It is becoming the light to the world that Joseph foresaw and through which knowledge is and will be diffused for public good and personal happiness. Let us now explore what it means for Brigham Young University to be a Church entity, a Zion university.

A Zion University

As almost everyone here knows, the word Zion in Latter-day Saint literature refers to the "pure in heart" or the "place where the pure in heart dwell" (D&C 97:21; Moses 7:1819). A Zion people are of one heart and one mind--they dwell in righteousness and have no poor among them. "The word university originally meant a community," but it also is used to mean "cosmos" or "totality."¹⁹In our context, a Zion university is a community of righteous scholars and students searching for truth for the purpose of educating the whole person. They understand that God's children are more than intellect and body. The intellect is housed in a spirit that must also be educated. Sacred or higher truths relating to the spirit are the foundational truths in a Zion community and center on Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh, the sacrificial Lamb who gave his life for the sins of the world, the First Fruits of the Resurrection. Community members also have full faith in the appearance of the Father and the Son to the Prophet Joseph in a vision in a grove of trees, believe that other angelic visitors

also appeared to him, and believe that the gospel and the holy priesthood were restored to earth following a long period of apostasy. They know that the Book of Mormon is what it professes to be and that revelation from God to his prophets is the guiding instrument for the Church. But we must also remember that as a university there is a prime obligation to teach secular truth. Our goal is to achieve excellence in this sphere. There must be no alibi for failure to achieve a first-class rank within the parameters set by the board of trustees. Continual improvement of faculty qualifications and performance is the key to this objective. Faculty turnover in the next few years will be high, but I am convinced that prospective faculty with the proper credentials have been and are being prepared.

Because the gospel is the common denominator at this university and since all truth is part of the gospel, every subject must be taught with testimony. Testimony is not to be encased in particular institutions on campus.²⁰ Brigham Young University is not a Harvard of the West or a Stanford of the Rocky Mountains with an institute of religion on the periphery. We have the opportunity to be better at discovering and teaching truth, all truth, because testimony can be everywhere and permeate everything.²¹ Testimony and the Holy Spirit have as much to do with English and mathematics as with religion if we are diligent in scholarship and obedient to gospel principles. Teachers and students in this community should understand that all truth is spiritual and thus the so-called secular truths may be discovered by revelation as well as by reason.

Arthur Henry King was a great Shakespearean scholar at this university. He understood the process of revelation in the discovery of secular truth. In a BYU forum speech in 1972, he related the following:

Niels Bohr, [the] Danish physicist Nobel-Prize winner . . . is reported to have said that he owed his discoveries more than anything else to the reading of Shakespeare. That may seem odd unless we have read that apparently frivolous book called *The Double Helix* about the discovery of the form of a genetic molecule by a young American in Cambridge: he tells exactly what happened during the days when he progressed towards that discovery. It is worth reading to realize that great discoveries in science like great writing come ultimately from--call it what you like--intuition; I would call it inspiration. The wind apparently "bloweth where it listeth"; but can anything worth-while happen on any university campus with which the Holy Ghost is not involved?²²

My favorite story illustrating the role of the Holy Ghost and the Light of Christ in the discovery of truth comes from James W. Cannon, a member of our mathematics department, regarding his discovery of how to unknot an infinitely knotted object in high-dimensional space. (He was a professor at the University of Wisconsin at the time.) After pushing the problem around for many months with no success, the solution came in an unexpected manner. He records:

One night at 2:00 a.m., my eyes suddenly popped open. I sat up in bed. . . . I knew how to extend*Stan'ko's techniques. I do not know how the answer came to me. I couldn't sleep. I dressed quietly and went walking on the dark streets of Madison. . . . I checked the ideas for all of their consequences. I checked for absurdities. I couldn't find any. The picture was wonderful.²³

Brother Cannon's experience is not unusual. After studying, puzzling, and dreaming about a problem, scientists often find progress stopped. Then, suddenly, as if out of nowhere, a flash of light comes. Secular truth is revealed by the Spirit as well as sacred truth.

Faculty Responsibility and Academic Freedom

May I now say a few words to the faculty, staff, and administration, although I expect the students to listen as well because it has application in their lives. A Brigham Young University appointment is a sacred trust. More than 27,000 youth of the Church selected on the basis of gospel commitment and scholarship potential are under our stewardship. Consequently, we have a responsibility to nurture their faith and improve their academic skills. The great majority of us are members of the LDS Church, and the prime requisite for employment is a personal testimony of and behavior consistent with the restored gospel. Nonmember faculty and staff are expected to live according to the light within them and standards agreed upon at the time of employment.

Placing commitment to gospel truths first in the life of a faculty member does not demean the second requirement of academic excellence. If testimony and high personal standards are the foundation, outstanding scholarship that includes teaching ability is the capstone. Both testimony and scholarship are essential for this university to achieve its destiny. They are not competitive, but complementary. The new administration is committed to academic excellence. The desire for excellence covers graduate studies and research in selected areas as well as continued improvement of undergraduate teaching. In particular, we believe that teaching quality must be improved in some key areas, and we will be working with the faculty to accomplish this. A personal commitment to gospel standards by faculty members will increase, not decrease, academic freedom. If applied, the gospel framework will keep us from gathering like flies hovering over the dead carcasses of secular error. As a close faculty friend pointed out to me recently, the greatest limitation on academic freedom comes when faculty take for granted the assumptions of colleagues at other institutions while developing secular theories. We will be more productive and enjoy more freedom if we examine and test secular assumptions under the lamp of gospel truth. We must not blindly accept the choices made by others. These statements obviously apply more to the social sciences and humanities than to the physical sciences, engineering, and the professions. However, even scholars in these areas would do well to measure the worth of their scholarship in the gospel light.

A brief illustration is in order. In speaking of the last days, Isaiah and Nephi indicate that people will "call evil good, and good evil; [will] put darkness for light, and light for darkness; [will] put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (See Isaiah 5:20, 2 Nephi 15:20.) Recently, I learned about a movie that was described by a newspaper critic as "wonderful, joyous." It was rated PG-13. The film features seven illicit relationships, including open marriage, fornication, and adultery. The main messages of the film are first, open marriages are acceptable; second, it is appropriate for men to abandon their wives and families if they become stressed; third, illicit relationships relieve grief and do no harm if secrecy is maintained; and fourth, premarital sex is normal. To a committed Latter-day Saint, the film is not wonderful or joyous, but depressing and sad as evil is called good again and again. There is a stark contrast between the messages of the film and the recently issued "Proclamation on the Family by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve."

There are scholars in this university who study the family. There are classes taught in several disciplines that relate to the family. If scholarship and teaching at this university are based on the proclamation's standards rather than on the world's standards, academic freedom will increase, and students will be spiritually strengthened to withstand the onslaught of evil--theories and practices that the world calls good. A society that is in moral decline is also in intellectual decline, for the one surely follows the other and follows fast.²⁴

The grass is not greener on the other side of the fence. What may appear to be limits on academic freedom derived from the religious nature of the institution actually provide additional

freedoms. It is imperative that we not mimic the research and teaching choices of our colleagues at other universities without first using the measuring rod of the gospel.

I believe, using the Lord's measuring stick, that we have the finest faculty and staff in the world. It is clearly the strongest faculty and staff ever assembled at Brigham Young University. I firmly believe that the Lord will strengthen the faculty in the process of time.

A Message to the Students

Finally, I now speak to the students. May I paraphrase an earlier president of Brigham Young University: "Our reason for being is to be a university. But our reason for being a university is the students." (President Dallin H. Oaks in his inaugural response stated: "Our reason for being is to be a university. But our reason for being a university is to encourage and prepare young men and women to rise to their full spiritual potential as sons and daughters of God."²⁵) For more than 120 years, this campus has had a distinctive character. Strangers who visit are struck by the cleanliness and orderliness of the buildings, the grounds, and especially the people. Although the dress and grooming standards may not seem as important as other parts of the Honor Code, they help us be a distinctive people. I remember visiting other college campuses during the early 1970s while serving as a faculty member at this university. It was the height of the "hippie" period, when long hair, drugs, sloppy clothes, and rebellion were the order of the day. It was so refreshing to return to this campus, to see the clean young people, and to feel the peace that prevails here. This administration is committed to preserving that atmosphere. We ask you to live by your word of honor regarding the dress and grooming standards. A few may be uncomfortable and may not want to abide by them. For those few, please have the intellectual courage and integrity to live the standards or depart peacefully and try another institution.

Last Sunday evening, as I watched many of you at the CES fireside with President Faust, I could tell you have testimonies. You are not doubters but seekers after truth. You recognize the Spirit. Many of you have experienced an epiphany as described by President Faust in that flashes of insight and testimony have come to you at critical times. Many of you have seen the manifestations of divine power. You have made covenants. You have been able to call heavenly power forth in your own lives. You understand that age is not a prerequisite in communing with the Lord and his Spirit.

May I share with you a flash of insight given me by the Spirit twenty years ago in which I learned about this university's major role in building the kingdom. It concerns you, the students. The Bateman family had just returned to Provo from the East Coast following my appointment as dean of the School of Management. We had been away for four years with a multinational corporation and had enjoyed ourselves immensely. Although we knew the decision to return to Brigham Young University was correct because prayers had been answered, I was still struggling emotionally with the new assignment.

In September 1975, we attended the first multistake fireside of the school year, similar to the one held last Sunday evening. We were sitting high up in the Marriott Center near portal C. As the speaker began his sermon for the evening, I looked out across a congregation that must have totaled 18,000, including all of the missionaries from the MTC. They were easy to spot because they were allowed to take off their suit coats! Approximately 2,500 white-shirted missionaries filled the section under portal M, and it was a sea of white. I looked at them and realized that within weeks they would be scattered to the four corners of the globe. It was exciting to contemplate the people they would serve, the change that would occur in the missionaries as they matured spiritually, and the miracles that would bring new members into the Church.

Then a flash of inspiration opened my mind as to the purpose of Brigham Young University. I realized that 27,000 students were being prepared to enter the world. Every year approximately 6,000 would leave Provo, scattering across North America with some going on to Europe, others to Asia, some to Africa, and a number to South America. Some might even go Down Under. If the university performed its roles well, deepening spiritual roots and providing a first-class education, in the course of time strong Church families would grow up in hundreds and thousands of communities all over the world. These BYU families would be waiting when later missionaries arrived. My earlier experiences in London, Boston, Colorado Springs, High Wycombe, Lancaster, Bedminster, Accra, and Lagos had pointed to the importance of just one or two strong families to form a core around which the Lord could build a branch, then a district, and finally a stake. The BYU families would be good neighbors, have strong relationships with business associates, and, if well-trained, be leaders in their communities. These strong families by example and invitation would open doors for missionaries to enter.

I then knew why we had returned to Brigham Young University. It provided a satisfying feeling on the journey home that evening. Students leaving the university with a first-rate education combined with spiritual strength based on faith in Christ and his restored gospel have a tremendous advantage in the world. They know who they are. They need not be afraid. Faculty members should know that their teaching and research are building something of great worth. Brigham Young University is a major contributor to the central mission of Christ's kingdom on earth.

I testify, brothers and sisters, that this institution will not fail. As Daniel prophesied, the kingdom will not be left to other people. Joseph's and Brigham's vision that the spiritual can be combined with the secular without the latter overcoming the former will prove true because of faith and priesthood power. Brigham Young University will be a light to the world, dispensing truth for the public good and for individual happiness. I say this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Part I, "Secular Learning in a Spiritual Environment," was delivered on March 8, 1993, at the third annual Laying the Foundations Symposium at BYU and appeared in the written proceedings of that conference. It was also published in *BYU Studies* 35, no. 2 (1995): 4355. At that time, Merrill J. Bateman was a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy. Elder Bateman began serving as president of Brigham Young University in January 1996. Part II, "A Zion University," was given January 9, 1996, as President Bateman's first devotional as president of Brigham Young University.

NOTES

¹Spencer W. Kimball, "Absolute Truth," in *Devotional Speeches of the Year 1977* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1978), 13738.

²Lectures on Faith, 7:3, comp. N. B. Lundwall (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, n. d.), 61.

³N. Eldon Tanner, "Ye Shall Know the Truth," *Ensign* 8 (May 1978), 15; italics in original.

⁴"What the World Owes Dr. Sabin," *Deseret News*, March 15, 1993, A6.

⁵"Mathematical Parables," *BYU Studies* 34, no. 4 (1994/95): 94. James W. Cannon is Professor of Mathematics at Brigham Young University.

⁶Parley P. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology*, 10th ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973), 12021.

⁷Evelyn Roehl, *Whole Food Facts* (Rochester, Vt.: Healing Arts Press, 1988), 115.

⁸Marion G. Romney, "Learn by Faith," in *BYU Speeches of the Year 1968* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1969), 4.

⁹Lindon J. Robison, "Economic Insights from the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1 (fall 1992): 3553.

¹⁰Robison, "Economic Insights," 45.

¹¹Robison, "Economic Insights," 47.

¹²Robison, "Economic Insights," 49.

¹³"There Is Sunshine in My Soul Today," Hymns of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985), 227.

¹⁴Jean Ernstrom, "Jesus, Listening, Can Hear," Ensign 18 (June 1988): 4647.

¹⁵Russell M. Nelson, "Drama on the European Stage," Ensign 21 (December 1991): 15; italics in original.

¹⁶Joseph Smith Jr., History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 4:269.

¹⁷Brigham Young, in Journal of Discourses (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 185486), 10:290.

¹⁸Young, in Journal of Discourses, 12:257.

¹⁹Arthur Henry King, "The Idea of a Mormon University," BYU Studies 13, no. 2 (1973): 115.

²⁰See King, "The Idea," 117.

²¹See King, "The Idea," 117.

²²King, "The Idea," 11718.

²³Cannon, "Mathematical Parables," 94.

²⁴See King, "The Idea," 119; also 2 Nephi 9:2840 and Moroni 9:1820.

²⁵Dallin H. Oaks, Inaugural Response, November 12, 1971, 18; italics in original.