

A Steady, Upward Course

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As President Bednar has said, I have come under assignment from the First Presidency to talk about the future of this institution. But I know enough about it to know that I need to talk first to the students because the Lord cares about you and would want me to recognize what has always been recognized at

Ricks College, that the institution is largely determined by you. And more than that, it's more than what I say or what even the teachers say; things happen here directed by the Lord in a rather specific way for your benefit.

A word about the lovely music. This choir has sung from the place where a choir sang the day I was inaugurated as the president of Ricks College. As they sang, somehow that came back to me again. I was touched then as I was now, not just by the beauty of your voices but by the faith. And I realized that I wasn't the only one in that room who was touched that day.

Just a month or so ago, I was on assignment and I was in an airport in San Francisco, waiting between planes. I saw a man that I thought I recognized, and I realized that he probably was having trouble recognizing me, too. It had been a number of years. He was the dean of the graduate school at Stanford University when I left that faculty to come here to become the president many, many years ago. I remember being surprised that he came to my inauguration, knowing how busy he was. I recall that somehow in the moments of the inaugural party, moving about, I saw him. I encountered him that day, and he was crying. He expressed gratitude for having been here.

When I met him in the lounge in San Francisco recently, his first words were: "I've retired now. I'm living in Montana." Then he wanted to tell me about a bishop of the Church that he had met. So of all the things that he would remember about me, he remembered the feelings of the gospel of Jesus Christ that he'd felt. He has not joined the Church yet, but he felt something here that you've felt. And I wanted you to know that as much as we thank the singers and those who prepared the music, what happened here today has been happening here for generations. That is, the Spirit of the Lord comes and touches people; and you've been in such a place and in such a moment today. You will years later, just like the dean of the Stanford Graduate School of Business, remember that there was a spirit here today.

Now the other thing I was impressed with is that you were asked to raise your scriptures. I felt as you did that to make a promise to you that I know will be fulfilled because it has

been fulfilled for me in the last few days. We live in a time of increasing difficulty and change. Many of us have felt some things that led us to the scriptures. In the last few days, I have found things I had never seen there before because, in my extremity, the Lord showed me things that He had prepared long ago to help me. I'll make you a promise: If you will, in the next few hours and days, go to the scriptures, you will, as you read them (pick them anywhere that you're led to read), see scriptures speaking to you as if it was the voice of God, as if He knew your needs and your concerns; and He will tailor that to you, and it will be a witness to you that He knows you and that in that set of scriptures that you lifted above your head is a means by which He can guide you and comfort you. I promise you, you'll have that experience—and it will be very personal—in the next few days.

Now, in the past few days our world changed. We were forced to look into the face of terrorism, not in a work of fiction or through television news clips of another nation. We saw it in our own land. That has brought anxiety and it will force changes in our lives. Some of the changes will be small. For instance, I drove to Rexburg this morning because I could attend more of a meeting of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles than if I spent two hours clearing security at the airport. Some changes will be larger. Those in the National Guard and the Reserves may be called away from their families and their normal lives.

I have a son and his wife who live with their six children in a country where there are personal risks. Those risks may now increase. His career depends on taking a series of international assignments. Should he change careers? What should he teach his children about risks and fear? We have two other sons, both former students at Ricks College, who work in an industry already hard-pressed by a faltering economy. They live in Boston. They flew the very flights that were involved in the tragedy this last week often, but by the blessing of heaven were at home on that day. Now there is a possibility that what happened in New York and Washington will further depress the economy and the capital markets. What changes should they consider? What should they teach their children about the future and uncertainty?

Each of us finds ourselves asking: "What other parts of my world that I thought were stable have now become uncertain?" No wonder that you and I have heard and read so often in the last few days "everything has changed." But at least two things will help us take courage and find direction.

First, change is part of life. For instance, growing up and growing older are adventures in change filled with uncertainties and surprises. And second, God, through prophets, prepared us to expect changes to accelerate in the world. Do you remember the words from section 45 of the Doctrine and Covenants, verses 26-27:

And in that day shall be heard of wars and rumors of wars, and the whole earth shall be in commotion, and men's hearts shall fail them, and they shall say that Christ delayeth his coming until the end of the earth.

And the love of men shall wax cold, and iniquity shall abound.

Although we face an increase in challenges, there is another change sweeping the earth. It is a flood of opportunity. The steady flow of invention is an example. A generation ago there were no small computers. But now university campuses connect them with fiber-optic cable, and that cable may be replaced soon by wireless technologies. There are now tens of thousands of people taking BYU courses through web technology. There was no web a few years ago. The cell phones, which figured so touchingly in the tragedies of last week, did not exist a generation ago. The list of powerful and helpful new technological miracles goes on and on, and the rate of innovation is accelerating. We will live for better or for worse with rapid change and the uncertainty it brings. You and I want to make that change work for the better for us and not for the worse. We could learn much of how to do that from what has been done at this school in the last year. The people here have set an example for us worthy of our support and our emulation.

Now I move away from my text for a moment. I've written this out because I wanted to be sure that I had the opportunity to share it in advance with President Hinckley—which I did—but I have felt at this moment that I needed to move away from that to speak to you so that you'd be sure to understand what this means for you.

This is a world of change. Both the increase of difficulty (and that's coming—the scriptures make that clear and the prophets have made that clear) and the increase of opportunities will bring tremendous change. What I intend to do is to describe to you the miraculous way in which this institution has done what you must do. I need to be very clear, and here it is.

Most of you, with caring parents, have at least once or twice as you left the house heard these words, "Remember who you are." Some of you remember hearing it with pain. "Oh, Mother. There you go again." Or, "Oh, there's Dad acting like a dad again." Remember who you are.

What I'd like to suggest to you is that they were telling you the right thing, but it assumed you had asked and answered a question correctly to know who you really are. Now think of the difficulty. One of the reasons it didn't work for some of you, by the way, is that you went out and did dumb things

remembering who you were because you remembered "I know who I am. I'm a crazy, mixed-up teenager, still trying to figure out who I am; and I remember, yeah, I remember who I am." And of course, then it doesn't work very well, does it? If you remembered "Oh, yeah. I'm the captain of the football team," or the basketball team, or something else, it might have helped a little bit. Or "I'm an example to my brothers and sisters." I don't know what it was, but I'll just tell you this—answering that question well and wisely will determine whether or not [you progress] in a world where you must make changes (some because there are opportunities you will have taken advantage of, some just in the course of life, some because of difficulties—many reasons). You're going to change tremendously and the world around you is going to change. The purpose of the gospel of Jesus Christ is to change you so that you're not trying to resist change. You're trying to have change take you where the Lord wants you to go. How you answer the question of who you are will determine almost everything.

What I will now read to you, carefully prepared and seen by the prophet of God, is a description of the process that this institution has gone through and why the way they have done it has led the Lord to tell them who they are in such a way that even though they change, the part of them that God would have stay the same will stay the same. Now, I just have to quickly say that each of you, individually, has had messages sent to you throughout your life, just as this institution has had messages sent to it about what the Lord sees as special and distinct.

I had the experience, as a young boy growing up in New Jersey, of reading the scriptures in school, before the Constitution was interpreted to say that was illegal. So, in the Princeton Township School, they used to have, every day, a student pick a scripture to read. And every time I was ever asked, I always read the same scripture. The poor kids in the class had to listen to it over and over again when my turn came because, for some reason, I had been told, "This is for you; this is about you." And so every thirty days, or however many students there were, my turn would come and I would read from chapter 13 of 1 Corinthians the same verse:

Charity suffereth long, and is kind;...charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.

(1 Corinthians 13:4)

That is a beautiful description of Paul. And I had been told as a little boy, "This is about you. And this is about the good life you will sometime have in a family." Now, this was when I was a little, little boy. I was thinking about the New York Yankees, not about a family.

Years later a patriarch put his hands on my head. Gascoe Romney (the grandfather, by the way, of Mitt Romney, who's the one running things in our Olympic efforts in Utah) put his hands on my head and gave me a blessing. He didn't know me. He had no way to know about that scripture. He described to

me the home that I might someday have exactly as I had seen it every time I heard that scripture as a little boy. And so I am eyewitness that God is speaking to you. He really is. He knows who you are—each of you distinct, each of you with some possibilities of great contribution and a good life—and He is trying always to tell you who you are.

What I will now describe, as I return to this text, is the miraculous thing that has happened here—where the Lord has guided this institution and will guide it in such a way that although there will be tremendous change, the personal deep and spiritual characteristics of the place will not only not be lost, they will be enhanced. Here they were forced to learn about rapid change.

Fifteen months ago, without warning, they were told that the two-year Ricks College was to become the four-year BYU-Idaho. What they have done since then is miraculous, and it is a two-fold miracle.

First, there is the miracle in how much they have done. In those fifteen months they created a detailed plan, hired new faculty, received conditional accreditation status which could have taken years, and then launched this venture, BYU-Idaho. And change will not end. The phrase “rethinking education” is not to be only a slogan for the transformation from a two- to four-year status, the school is to be a place of educational innovation—permanently.

The second part of the miracle is the way they have made the changes. The people who serve here have found a way to make changes—great and rapid changes—that will enhance, not replace, the best of what the school has always been. Because of that, I can with confidence make you a promise. When you return in some distant future, you will find great innovation has become commonplace, and yet, amidst all the changes, the school will have retained and enriched the basic characteristics that blessed your life.

Let me tell you how that has happened in the last fifteen months and why I am so confident that it will continue. It is worth your hearing because it could be applied in our personal lives. Each of us wants to live in a world of change where our personal reaction to it is not only productive but where it enhances the best of what we are. We could begin where those who lead the school did. They took the words of living prophets as their guide.

President Hinckley chairs the Board of Trustees. On June 21 in the year 2000, he read a brief announcement to the media in Salt Lake City. The text is less than a single page. It has only twenty-one sentences in it, yet in the faithful way the people here followed that guide lays the basis of my optimism about the future.

One of the shortest sentences in the announcement is this one: “Adjustments to its mission will be minimal.” Now, think for a moment of the rush of pride that might come into a human heart on being told your two-year college was to become a “university,” and not an obscure university.

The announcement read:

The new four-year school will be known as Brigham Young University-Idaho, with the name change designed to give the school immediate national and international recognition.

That could tempt, in fact it would tempt, most people to make a minimal adjustment in the mission of the school to look more like the secular schools whose praise we might want. But the mission statement submitted to the accreditation agency in the plan entitled, “Substantive Change Prospectus for the Addition of Degree Programs at a Higher Level” was not changed at all. These could be the words of President Thomas E. Ricks or Principal Jacob Spori or any of the leaders from the beginning.

The first goal, stated boldly and plainly in the prospectus, is to “build testimonies of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and to encourage living its principles.” That choice to put the Savior and His purposes first is the primary basis of my confidence in the future.

Every innovation, every change, will be measured against this test of the heart. How would this proposed change build testimony and true conversion to the restored gospel of Jesus Christ in the heart of a student? True conversion comes by gaining sufficient faith to live the principles of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Some potential and proposed innovations will help that to happen. There will be other innovations proposed that would be less helpful or might even hinder. The cumulative effect of change here will be to build testimony and accelerate true conversion.

Another effect of that goal will be to bring here only teachers who have the Savior and His goal in their hearts. That choice to put the Savior at the center led to the other key choices made in the transition and will assure that those choices will endure. For instance, President Hinckley said in the announcement:

BYU-Idaho will continue to be teaching oriented. Effective teaching and advising will be the primary responsibilities of its faculty, who are committed to academic excellence.

The institution will emphasize undergraduate education and will award baccalaureate degrees; graduate degree programs will not be offered. Faculty rank will not be a part of the academic structure of the new four-year institution.

Only people who put the Savior first and take His life as their model could do that, since it is so foreign to so much of what goes on in universities. There are good people who think that it's impossible to have academic excellence without, in time, adding graduate programs. And most faculties so treasure the marks of personal status that they would be puzzled by a university without faculty rank. But

there will be outstanding undergraduate education, even with those apparent paradoxes.

President Hinckley, in the press conference after his announcement, said, “It will be just as good a teaching institution as we can make it.” That will happen because the Savior is and will be the great exemplar. He was a teacher. His work and glory was to lift others. He taught His disciples not to set themselves as being better than others, but to be the servants of all. Only a faculty who believe those things could see a blessing in serving without academic rank. Only a faculty with hearts set on the Savior could believe that they could keep growing as teachers in their changing and challenging fields without graduate programs. Only those with faith that the Savior will help them would respond with enthusiasm to President Bednar’s vision of the future for this faculty:

In my mind the overarching theme for all of our scholarly work at Brigham Young University-Idaho should be inspired inquiry and innovation. Let me repeat that: inspired inquiry and innovation. We are not like other institutions of higher education; we have access to the gifts of the Spirit, which cannot be quantified nor counted. There are simply things we cannot adequately define and describe about the process of teaching with the Spirit. But, nonetheless, we should be excellent scholars, and our scholarship should be focused on the processes of learning and teaching. We will not be a recognized and highly regarded research institution in the traditional sense of that term. We will, however, emphasize a wide range of scholarly endeavors and excel in and play a pioneering role in understanding learning and teaching processes with faith and hard work, and in the process of time.

That pioneering role as a leader in understanding learning and teaching will come to pass. I, as a servant of Jesus Christ, testify to you that I know that will happen. Even with these apparently humble and even paradoxical standards of what we will be and who we will be, that miracle will occur and this institution, in the world, will become a place that people know of because of the insights that will come as we come to understand the teaching and learning process here. I so testify.

The school will enhance another of its characteristics which will carry it safely through turbulent times, and it will come from showing students by example how to live with great faith. That characteristic is frugality. Listen again to the words of President Bednar speaking to the faculty and staff during this time of change:

There is a responsibility to be prudent in the management of the resources, and there are places where we need to improve. If there is an example of use it up, wear it out, making do, or do without, we are that

place. If we ever lost that, we would be in trouble. So we need to be careful what we ask for.

Now those of you who are young don’t understand all that was in that statement. I was the president of Ricks College. I couldn’t understand. I couldn’t understand why the Brethren were always coming to me, the men who lead the Church, when I was the president, saying: “What more can we do for you? What more can we do for you?” I didn’t understand that. I now do. They knew this place, and they knew we wouldn’t ask. They knew we’d make do. Listen to President Bednar:

I think, for example of the word *Spartanism*. All of us who have read Greek history know there are some aspects of Spartan culture that are not noteworthy nor praiseworthy nor of good report.

That was plagiarism from Paul. No, that was plagiarism from the thirteenth Article of Faith. Excuse me; my Primary was limited. We didn’t have Primary in New Jersey in the mission field, and I didn’t get that.

There are, however, some things we are to be pursuing. As I define the word *Spartanism*, it refers to rigorously self-disciplined and self-restrained. That is part of the spirit of Ricks at Brigham Young University-Idaho—simple, frugal, or austere; courageous in the face of pain, danger, or adversity.

I need to say I read every document I could get my hands on to prepare this for President Hinckley’s approval. And I read it worrying. I thought, you know with all the change that’s going on there, they’re going to lose their way. I want you to know (as a former president of Ricks College, as someone who came here as a young man and tried to find my way, and now as the commissioner of education and as a member of the Quorum of Twelve), I wept as I read the things that President Bednar said to this faculty during his period of time—knowing, first, that he was raised up for this task; but secondly, that the very things the Lord had told me, and told me over and over again, he said in better words than I could have said them, and that’s why I am quoting President Bednar so much here in this talk; it is not to flatter him. I want you to know that the Lord revealed to him some things that are true and are permanent and will guide this institution. Now that was the end of the quotation from him. I say this now for myself:

I am not sure where the Spartans got those characteristics, but I know why they are possessed by true disciples of Jesus Christ. Latter-day Saint pioneers came to this place for the Lord. They built this school in their poverty. The first principal, Jacob Spori, housed his family in an unheated grain storage shed in his first winter because that’s all they had. The people here have treated all they had as the Lord’s and always counted it as enough. And they have used it as if it was the offering

of the poorest widow to her Lord and to His kingdom. Nor have they felt badly treated when the Lord asked them to take less and yet give more. Because of that faithful obedience and sacrifice, I certify the Lord has poured out His Spirit here.

There will be a practical benefit, in turbulent times, from that frugality borne of faith. There will come times when the Lord's prophet will ask us to do more with less. Knowing that will come, we must and will find ways to improve and to innovate that require little or no money. We will depend more upon inspiration and perspiration to make improvements than upon buildings and equipment. Then hard economic times will have little effect on the continuous innovation that will not cease at this school, even in the most difficult times.

The true disciples who have served here have believed that if they were frugal and faithful the Lord will provide enough to do His work. They have rarely deserved the chastening in chapter 6 of the Prophet Joseph Smith's translation of Matthew:

Why is it that ye murmur among yourselves, saying, We cannot obey thy word because ye have not all these things, and seek to excuse yourselves, saying that, After all these things do the Gentiles seek.

Behold, I say unto you that your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

Wherefore, seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. (Joseph Smith, *The Holy Scriptures, Inspired Version, Matthew 6:36-38*)

President Hinckley expressed confidence that frugality was here and would endure when he said in his announcement:

With some additions and modifications, the physical facilities now in place in Rexburg are adequate to handle the new program. Undoubtedly, some changes to the campus will be necessary. However, they will be modest in nature and scope.

He also said:

Of necessity, the new four-year institution will be assessing and restructuring its academic offerings. Predictably, the school will need to change and eliminate some long-standing and beneficial programs as the school focuses upon key academic disciplines and activities.

Now, President Hinckley has long experience in education—long experience—so he knew how remarkable it was to pay such a tribute to this place. He said there would be focus, not a growth and spread, in the academic offerings. He expected that people would willingly sacrifice what they do best and love most for what the Lord wants even more for our students. He

expected that people here would find ways to make the physical space already in place sufficient to do more for more students. Listen to this from his announcement and consider the tribute he was paying with his confidence:

BYU-Idaho will operate on an expanded year-round basis, incorporating innovative calendaring and scheduling while also taking advantage of advancements in technology which will enable the four-year institution to serve more students.

The expectation is clearly that inspired and frugal people will find ways to bless more students at ever lower cost per student. That has been true at some times in the past. It will be true in the future, whatever the turbulent times ahead will bring. For those characteristics to endure, the students—you and those who follow you—must play a major part. It is their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and in His restored gospel and their obedience to His commandments that will put Him at the center of the school. Their faith will largely determine whether we learn here by study and also by faith. As we do, we will attain academic excellence. We will not attain academic excellence without that faith of yours as students and those that follow to learn by study and by faith. It is your frugality and their frugality, their willingness to make due with a little less, that will set a tone for the campus. Their sacrifice, your sacrifice, will bring down the blessings of heaven as it always has. The students will learn from example how to keep on a steady upward course in times of great change. They will see leaders and teachers and staff members for whom the Savior and His kingdom are at the center of their lives. From that example, I make a prophesy. Now listen carefully.

From that example they—you—will become life-long teachers in their families, in the Church, and in their work, and they will bless others wherever they go by what they have learned about innovating with scarce resources and treating all they have as if it were the Lord's.

You can imagine the joy of an employer or a Church leader when such a graduate arrives. The graduates will be at personal peace by having kept the commandments. They will be natural leaders who know how to teach and how to learn. They will have the power to innovate and improve without requiring more of what money can buy. Those graduates of BYU-Idaho will become—and this is a prophesy that I am prepared to make and make solemnly—those graduates of BYU-Idaho will become legendary for their capacity to build the people around them and to add value wherever they serve.

Each of us can follow the example we have seen here. We can follow a steady upward course in a world of change without fear, welcoming the opportunities. The way is a simple one, clearly marked. It is to keep our eyes and hearts fixed on that which is unchangeable. We must have an eye of faith fixed on eternal life. That life, the greatest of all the gifts of God, is to live in glory forever in families in the presence of our loving

Heavenly Father. It takes a focused eye. Listen. Alma, chapter 5, verse 15:

Do ye exercise faith in the redemption of him who created you? Do you look forward with an eye of faith, and view this mortal body raised in immortality, and this corruption raised in incorruption, to stand before God to be judged according to the deeds which have been done in the mortal [life]?

For our eyes to be focused on eternal life, we must have unwavering confidence and our hearts fixed on the Savior. He said, in 3 Nephi, chapter 9, verses 14-15:

Yea, verily I say unto you, if ye will come unto me ye shall have eternal life. Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, and whosoever will come, him will I receive; and blessed are those who come unto me.

Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. I created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are. I was with the Father from the beginning. I am in the Father, and the Father in me; and in me hath the Father glorified his name.

Our hearts, fixed on Him and His work, will keep us on course, however the wind blows. We will follow His prophet. We will see the greatest work of our lives as nurturing others as the Savior did. We will see the potential in others as He sees it. We will treat every resource that comes into our hands as a trust from Him. We will see our victories as a gift from Him and so be proof against pride. We will not fear because we will know we are on His errand.

Now, you young people, I need to commend you and warn you, if I may. A number of you dressed carefully to come to this meeting, not for me but for the Lord. A number of you were quiet at the beginning, not for me or for President Bednar but for the Lord. A number of you in this room, I know, have been praying. I have felt that. One of the joys of coming to Ricks College has always been for me to know that I would go into a room where people of faith would be praying that the Holy Ghost would be poured out. Every time I come, I always have a confirmation that that's happened again. One of the reasons that we can prophesy about the academic excellence that will be here is you will do that same thing in classes. And those that follow you will do it in classes. You will do it in the evenings. You'll pray for the blessings of heaven to come down upon your teachers. You'll pray that you'll be taught by the Holy Spirit. The prayer that I've felt in this room is one of the things that has made this institution worthy of the trust that has been given it by the prophet of God. I want you to know that, that I know that about you.

Now, in addition, I would suggest this: The very fact that you dress nicely, I understand, at least is partly true because somebody may have said something to you. One of your

friends may have suggested, "Why don't we go dressed a little better for that meeting today." Those of you in this room who did that (and I don't know how many there are; there may be just a few who said, "Why don't we do a little more so that the Spirit of God..."—you may not have used these words, but what you were saying was, "Let's go to that meeting in such a way that we might bring down the powers of heaven"), those of you in the room that had the courage to do that, to try to influence the persons around you, I'll make you a prophesy. I will simply tell you: The day will come that that capacity to influence people around you for good will have you singled out as one of the great leaders in whatever place you're in. They will not quite know why, but you will know that the reason you are being singled out is not because of your innate gifts as a leader but because you have done what the Savior would do—learned how to, and did, reach out to those around you to try to lift them, to help them to be better even when it might be a little bit difficult and you might not have been received very well. Another thing that I will say to you. I've mentioned so much about frugality. You might say, "Brother Eyring, that's an awful thing to say. We go first-class in the Church. Why would you talk about that? I mean, heavens, we want to make it as fancy as we can." I would only say this to you:

You want to have a beautiful campus. You want to have a beautiful place that you live in someday in your family. You want to have things as nice as you can have them. But I'll tell you something. One of the things that you do is to always look at every nice thing you have as God's and treat it very, very carefully. This campus will be beautiful because you don't think it's yours—you think it's His, and you'll care for it that way. In addition, you will not ever, ever ask for more than you need. You will always say, "Is there a way, with more effort, more faith, more innovation, that I could do the things the Lord wants without asking for more of the resources that are in scarce supply even in a Church that appears to have great resources, as we do?" But the needs are great, and the opportunities are tremendous for what can be done.

I want you to know that the reason those people from the Board of Education used to say, "Hal, isn't there something more we could do for you up there at Ricks College?" is that they were almost afraid we wouldn't ask; that we might run just a little too lean, just a little too hard, trying to do the best we could with what we had; just afraid we might overdo it because that's who we were.

I testify to you this beautiful campus that you see now is the reward from a loving God and His Board of Education that said: "We know those people. We know what they're like. They're out of a pioneer heritage, and they don't think that the things they have mean much. It's what they are. And they think they can do a very great deal without very much."

Now I testify to you that that blessing is both a practical one and a spiritual one. It's practical because then the Lord will provide when we do need something, and He'll provide generously because He trusts us. But it has another benefit as

well. I testify to you that that spirit of sacrifice, that spirit of trying to give just a little bit more and ask a little less brings down the powers of heaven. And all of this great future that we're speaking of at this institution will depend upon miracles regularly occurring, where students learn more than you thought you could learn. Some of you have already been praying for that miracle. It will come. Do your homework, by the way; don't just pray. I've tried. Straight revelation in a mathematics examination—it does not work very well. It's better to have studied the work ahead of time. We'll do both, but that kind of a blessing will come. You will be learners. Your teachers will teach better than their natural capacities would ever allow them to do because the powers of heaven will come down. They will come down because of your faith.

Remember my little talk to you about frugality is an example of your faith. It's not the only way. But it's one way in which you'll say, "Look, we know that with the help of heaven we can do more than anybody could imagine with the resources that we have. We know that with the help of heaven even those of us who thought we couldn't learn mathematics can learn mathematics or learn a language. We know that that's possible."

The miracle that President Bednar spoke of and that I promised you—that this will become a place renowned for its understanding of teaching and learning—will have to face the very problem he, under inspiration, pointed out in his talk to the faculty. We can't "quantify the gifts of the Spirit." We don't know how that works. We probably never will write academic papers about how that works. But we will be able to do things here that will amaze the world in terms of the rate and the quality of learning, and we will learn ways about how that is done that will apply in other places in the world, but never quite as well as they apply here. That's a little like the people who say, "Could I borrow your family home evening manual? I want to have a family like yours." And the answer is, "It ain't in the manual." The manual is a reflection of what it is that happens in those family home evenings.

It will be that way here as well. We will have a spiritual outpouring, because of your faith and the faith of the faculty and those who lead here, that will lead us to be legendary in terms of our capacity to teach and to learn and in our capacity to innovate without needing the resources that others have to have in order to be the remarkable contributors you're going to be. And that's going to follow you everywhere you go.

I hope I live long enough to someday meet some employer who employed one of you and says, "Where did that come from? I've never had such a person. Why people just flock around that person. And they want to follow. They don't have to be led; they're seeking to go where that person wants to go. And they come up with new ideas. I don't know where that comes from. They seem to find a better way, and the budget doesn't go up. I can't understand it." And I'll smile and say, "Well, come with me to Rexburg." And I may not be able to show it to you, and I may not be able to prove it to you, but

you'll feel it. There will be a spirit here, I so testify, because of the love of God for all of His faithful children. And those blessings will be poured out here in rich abundance.

Now, I leave you my blessing. I leave it to the faculty, and I leave it to the students who are here as well. I bless you that every day you are here—including the faculty who may be here for a long time and some of you I don't know how long, but awhile—I bless you that every day, if you will ask in prayer to be shown where the hand of God intervened in your life that day, I bless you that you will see that. It will be made manifest to you. That you will see that He is leading and guiding and lifting you, and that He knows you. I bless you. I bless you with confidence that if you will review the day at the end of the day and then pray and ask, you will have revealed to you evidence that the hand of God was lifting you and this institution. I so bless you.

I further bless you that you may have the capacity to influence others. I bless you that you will be a lifter, a teacher, and a leader. I so bless you in your families, in the Church, and in wherever place you may go to serve.

Now I leave you my testimony. The most precious gift I have. And that is this. I bless you to know that what I speak now is the truth. There is a loving Heavenly Father. He has been watching us today as He always watches us. He knows you. He has known you and has nurtured you. He has a plan for you as He has a plan for this institution of what it might become if it can just have revealed, both to the institution and to you, who you really are. Oh, He loves you! He knows you. He smiles down upon you. I so testify. He wants you to come home again to Him, I so testify. And He's provided a Savior, Jesus Christ. He lives. I know He lives. The Savior is resurrected. He is in one place at a time because He is a resurrected being, but He is aware of us and all of our Heavenly Father's children. And for all of them, He atoned for their sins and broke the bands of death, I so testify.

Gordon B. Hinckley is a living prophet of God. I testify to you that in the years ahead, whatever difficulties may come, whatever opportunities are there, God will provide a living prophet. If you will listen, listen and believe like a child the way those who lead this institution did at this time of transition, if you will do that, whatever the transitions are in your life, you will not only retain the goodness that God has been so helpful in building into you, it will be enhanced. I testify to you that's true. I pray that I may see you again sometime. I pray that I may come back to this place again sometime and know that when I see you and when I come here I will have seen the blessings of God come down on faithful people who've allowed Him to shape them to the great opportunities that He has before you and before this place, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. 🙏