

“Patterned After the House of the Lord”

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Thank you, Elder Holland and President Oaks. In the October 1985 General Conference, President Gordon B. Hinckley, who was then serving as a counselor in the First Presidency, said the following: “I am driven by two resolutions. The first is to serve the Lord to the very best of my ability.... The second is to serve His chosen prophet.... I consider these to be sacred and binding obligations and more important than all other considerations.”¹

I want the Church Board of Education to know that I too am driven by these resolutions, as are all who serve at BYU-Pathway Worldwide.

To our colleagues at BYU-Idaho, Ensign College, and Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, with whom we partner for instructors, curriculum, and accredited credentials, please know of our gratitude for our partnerships with you. We recognize the vital role you play in serving our joint students. We are also very grateful for our burgeoning partnership with BYU-Hawaii, which helps students from Oceania and the Pacific Rim to meet the entrance requirements for BYU-Hawaii.

The divine pattern of learning

Now as we prepare to consider the future of BYU-Pathway Worldwide, it is essential to recognize that, in God’s kingdom on the earth, it is in the House of the Lord, the holy temples, that we find the divine pattern for education and learning.² This pattern includes:

- Focusing on Jesus Christ who is “the source of truth and light.”³
- Participating in ordinances and making and keeping sacred covenants, which brings the power of godliness into our lives.⁴
- Preparing men and women to go forth to teach the gospel, gather scattered Israel, and fulfill any other mission God may have for them.⁵
- Making God’s highest blessings accessible to all His children who will abide by certain worthiness standards regardless of where they live or their economic status.
- Putting knowledge in the context of the plan of salvation and eternity, including helping students understand their divine potential.
- Helping one another throughout the learning process.⁶

¹ Gordon B. Hinckley, “[Rejoice in This Great Era of Temple Building](#),” *Ensign*, Nov. 1985

² Others have previously touched on this idea. See, for example, Merrill J. Bateman, “[Temples of Learning](#),” (Brigham Young University devotional, Sep. 10, 2002), [speeches.byu.edu](#); Henry B. Eyring, “[The Temple and the College on the Hill](#),” (Brigham Young University-Idaho devotional, Jun. 9, 2009), [byui.edu/foundational-addresses](#); Clark G. Gilbert, “[Know Ye Not That Ye are The Temple of God](#),” (BYU-Pathway Worldwide Inauguration, Nov. 16, 2017), [byupathway.org/speeches](#)

³ Bruce R. McConkie, “[The Testimony of Jesus](#),” *Ensign*, July 1972; “[I Believe in Christ](#),” *Hymns*, no. 134; see also [Doctrine and Covenants 93:26](#)

⁴ See [Doctrine and Covenants 84:20–21](#)

⁵ See [Doctrine and Covenants 38:32–33, 38; 43:15–16; 88:70–84; 95:3–9; 97:8–9, 13–14; 105:9–12, 31–33; 109:6–8, 14–15, 22–23, 35–42; 110:9](#)

⁶ See Henry B. Eyring, “[The Temple and the College on the Hill](#),” (Brigham Young University-Idaho devotional, Jun. 9, 2009), [byui.edu/foundational-addresses](#)

Each part of this pattern is designed, at least in part, to bring the Holy Ghost more fully into our lives. The Holy Ghost is essential to our learning for the following reasons. It is the Holy Ghost who is “the teacher and witness of all truth”⁷ and will “teach [us] all things that are expedient for [us].”⁸ The Holy Ghost gives us access to God’s power so that we can accomplish our goals and serve others. And, because He is a member of the Godhead, having the Holy Ghost in our lives is both practice as well as cleansing⁹ and soul-expanding¹⁰ preparation for becoming like God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and dwelling in Their presence. Becoming like God is, in fact, the ultimate purpose of education.

It is not surprising then that section 97 of the Doctrine and Covenants, which is about the House of the Lord and building Zion, begins with a message to those who “are truly humble and are seeking diligently to learn wisdom and to find truth.”¹¹ The Lord goes on to address the “school in Zion,”¹² promising its students that if they will have honest and broken hearts, contrite spirits, and observe their covenants by sacrifice, they will bring forth “much precious fruit.”¹³ The Lord then discusses the need to build a temple. As is suggested in this section, a school in Zion should prepare its students to enter into and keep the covenants they make in the House of the Lord. Finally, this section ends with instructions, which suggest that both a school and a temple may be necessary for building Zion.

The Lord has said that He “will give [us] a pattern in all things, that [we] may not be deceived.”¹⁴ Like its sister Church Educational System (CES) institutions, BYU-Pathway must “be a school in Zion”¹⁵ and, to borrow a phrase from Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, “a legitimate academic [and, I would add, spiritual] descendant of the School of the Prophets.”¹⁶ BYU-Pathway’s employees, service missionaries, other volunteers, students, and partners must use the educational pattern provided by the House of the Lord in all we do. If we ever stray from using that pattern,¹⁷ we will find ourselves in trouble as an institution.

Building disciple leaders of Jesus Christ

With the temple as our standard and Zion as our goal, I want to discuss what we must do to fulfill BYU-Pathway’s mission and strategy.

BYU-Pathway’s mission is to develop disciples of Jesus Christ who are leaders in their homes, the Church, and their communities. In a recent BYU-Pathway devotional, President Dallin H. Oaks described these leaders as “self-reliant servants of Jesus Christ and [their] fellowmen.”¹⁸ These leaders must seek to follow the example of Jesus Christ, of Whom it is written: “He doeth not anything save it be for the benefit of the world; for he loveth the world, even that he layeth down his own life that he may draw all men unto him.”¹⁹ In other words, the disciple leaders BYU-Pathway and its partners seek to develop must not be concerned about position or prominence. Rather they must lead using the pattern set forth in Doctrine and Covenants 121:

⁷ David A Bednar, “[Seek Learning by Faith](#),” *Ensign or Liahona*, Sept. 2007, 66

⁸ [Doctrine and Covenants 75:10](#)

⁹ See [3 Nephi 27:20](#)

¹⁰ See [Doctrine and Covenants 121:42](#)

¹¹ [Doctrine and Covenants 97:1](#)

¹² [Doctrine and Covenants 97:3](#)

¹³ [Doctrine and Covenants 97:9](#)

¹⁴ [Doctrine and Covenants 52:14](#)

¹⁵ [Doctrine and Covenants 97:3](#)

¹⁶ Jeffrey R. Holland, “[A School in Zion](#)” (Brigham Young University devotional, Aug. 22, 1988), speeches.byu.edu

¹⁷ There are some things that are done in the temple that would be inappropriate to model in BYU-Pathway.

¹⁸ Dallin H. Oaks, “[Leadership](#)” (BYU-Pathway Worldwide devotional, Feb. 8, 2022), byupathway.org/speeches

¹⁹ [2 Nephi 26:24](#)

No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile — Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy; That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death. Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly....²⁰

If we do our jobs well, the righteousness and truth that our students embody will cause those they serve to follow our students' lead without regard to our students' callings or positions. This will lead to lasting change among those our students influence.²¹

BYU-Pathway and its partners can only build these types of leaders as we help them bring the Holy Ghost into their lives. We do this by focusing our students on Jesus Christ, emphasizing the need to make and keep sacred covenants, especially in the House of the Lord; teaching pure truth in the context of the plan of salvation; helping students to apply those truths; and providing opportunities for service. We must also assist these future disciple leaders to be self-reliant.

Serving the “hidden many”

BYU-Pathway Worldwide's strategy is to serve those who have not traditionally had access to higher education, the “hidden many,” and to do so wherever The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is organized.²² Our goal is to make BYU-Pathway accessible and able to be completed by anyone who is willing to abide by the worthiness standards for admission regardless of where they live or their financial status.²³ With exceptionally low tuition and approval to serve students from more than 180 countries, BYU-Pathway has already made great strides toward being accessible. But there remain many worthy sons and daughters of God who still cannot access higher education through BYU-Pathway or any other institution. As a result, BYU-Pathway and its partner institutions must do more, including:

- Building awareness of BYU-Pathway such that it is regularly discussed by ward and stake councils and presidencies throughout the Church as a tool for blessing those to whom they minister to.²⁴
- Making our operating model, including our processes and systems, scalable for whatever size the Church needs it to be as approved by the Board of Education.
- Discovering additional innovative and inspired ways to reduce the cost of a BYU-Pathway education without lowering quality or losing the one-on-one experiences that are so vital to students' spiritual and academic success.
- Providing scholarships to students where there is additional financial need.
- Offering mentoring support to students throughout their degree programs.
- Overcoming technological barriers that hinder student success in some parts of the world.

²⁰ [Doctrine and Covenants 121:41–45](#)

²¹ See [Doctrine and Covenants 121:45–46](#)

²² See Clark G. Gilbert and Brian K. Ashton, “[The Distinctive Strategy of BYU-Pathway Worldwide,](#)” [byupathway.org/foundational-documents.pdf](#)

²³ No ecclesiastical endorsement is required for PathwayConnect, BYU-Pathway's foundational courses that prepare students to enter a degree program. This has allowed thousands of students to enroll and make or renew covenants with the Savior. It has also allowed BYU-Pathway to become a very effective ministering tool. Students must have an ecclesiastical endorsement to begin a degree program.

²⁴ See [General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](#), 22.10.1; 22.13; 24.8.2; and 29.3.8; [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](#)

- Working closely with the Church Board of Education to explore possibilities to make the blessing of a higher education through BYU-Pathway available to those who do not speak English.
- Simplifying our application and ecclesiastical endorsement processes, especially for non-native English speakers and international students and leaders.
- Shortening the time to graduation.
- Helping students more effectively prepare to find jobs,²⁵ including working remotely for companies in higher wage nations.

Students are reaping the spiritual blessings of education

Now as we build disciple leaders and make the blessings of education available and affordable to more of God's children — thus bringing the Holy Ghost more fully into their lives — we will assist in filling the world with truth and light and help bring an increasing number of the willing hearted and their families to Christ.

As a result, there will be more experiences like that of Dwight from Togo in West Africa, who learned about BYU-Pathway from his member friend, Jeff. With BYU-Pathway Dwight found an affordable higher education program that didn't require him to leave his home country. In his studies Dwight learned that he is a son of God with a purpose in life, and that there are living prophets, and that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ love him. This is a picture of Dwight at his recent baptism.

Or Stefanie from Suriname in South America, who had stopped attending church after her divorce. Some friends from institute introduced Stefanie to BYU-Pathway. Her experience at BYU-Pathway led her to return to church. She is now the Relief Society president in her ward, and her new husband is learning about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Or Aaron from the United States who, after a decade of not attending church felt, so much love and acceptance at BYU-Pathway that he rekindled his faith. Aaron recently made covenants in the House of the Lord, accompanied by his service missionaries. Aaron and his wife now look forward to being sealed together.

Embedded in the Church

Now a final note: BYU-Pathway cannot do what it does on its own. I mentioned earlier our partnerships with BYU-Idaho, Ensign College, Seminaries and Institutes, and BYU-Hawaii. BYU-Pathway also works in various ways with the other Church Educational System institutions. BYU-Pathway works with many of the Church departments, including Welfare and Self-Reliance Services, ICS, Missionary, Temple, Family History, Priesthood and Family, Publishing Services, Correlation, Church Communications, Human Resources, the Office of General Counsel, and others. These partnerships are vital to the success of BYU-Pathway and our students. We are grateful for the opportunity to work with each of these entities and hope that our interactions with you will further help to build Zion.

Brothers and sisters, I bear my witness that Heavenly Father wants to bless His children through education. Jesus is the Christ. Through Him all things are possible. The Savior leads and guides The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints through prophets and apostles. We at BYU-Pathway are grateful to have their direction, along with the inspiration of the Holy Ghost in this work. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

²⁵ This includes hiring our students from all over the world to do part-time jobs within BYU-Pathway. This will provide them with invaluable work experience and prepare them for future professional opportunities. It will also help supplement some very meager student incomes.